Secrets of Metaethics

Within Good and Evil

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O Duty,
Why hast thou not the visage of a sweetie or a cutie? …
Why art thou so different from Venus
And why do thou and I have so few interests mutually in common
between us?

– Ogden Nash, “Kind of an Ode to Duty”

Introduction

In the 1955 Disney animated short *Beezy Bear*, the title character Humphrey the Bear is sneakily trying to steal honey from beekeeper Donald Duck. In order to escape from the bees and evade detection from park ranger Woodlore, Humphrey jumps into nearby ponds. Upon at one point observing Humphrey in a pond who immediately begins to make body-washing gestures, Woodlore says to him, "You take too many baths!"

I found this an astonishing statement which is why I have remembered the cartoon. What does it mean, "too many" baths? Too many from whose point of view? Why too many and not too few? What's the criteria for just the right number of baths? From what authority does Woodlore admonish Humphrey? Who decides, or ought to, how many baths are enough?

In one sense, surely, one's bathing preferences are beyond criticism. We have a case of a subjective and arbitrary desire, something that causes pleasure or more formally is a source of utility. Taking a bath is an economic good or as we will call it to distinguish it from other kinds of goods, a *physical* good. For such goods, there is no accounting for taste. In choosing how many baths to take there is no objectively right or wrong answer. Nor is the choice absolute for all men – or bears as the case may be: each person's caprice will suit him uniquely. Physical goods are by their essence relative.

Humphrey's bathing activities can be impugned to the extent that they are incorrect means to Humphrey's own ends. If our bear just wants to be clean, and an extra bath will not make him any cleaner, then we have a reason for advising Humphrey to chill. Taking a bath is presumably somewhat costly; it's an exertion justified by some expected benefits. If the benefits are zero, then from Humphrey's own perspective, taking another bath will result in a psychic loss, and he ought not to do it. The means may be ineffective: for example, perhaps bathing is pointless if one lives in the woods, since a wild animal will get dirty very quickly. Again it follows that the costs exceed the benefits and make an action unprofitable. In general, however, Woodlore is out of line to disparage Humphrey's hygiene predilections.

In the actual world, there is the formidable problem that individual interests conflict, and physical goods, including both consumer goods and factors of production, are both scarce and rivalrous. Scarcity means that goods do not already exist in some Marxian state of limitless abundance and must be produced; rivalrous consumption means that once a good has been produced, it must be economized, and one can't normally both have his cake and eat it, too. Fortunately, there

is a way to harmonize our projects.

The free market is a living process through which the actions of billions of individuals are coordinated, and people's preferences are satisfied increasingly well with time. Its crucial feature is consumer sovereignty: entrepreneurs compete with and seek to outdo each other at indulging consumer desires. Physical value judgments are then the domain of the buying public. Any consumer is free to buy whatever he wants, to change his tastes, to spurn a product or develop a loyalty to it. Now it is true that when stripped of the voice of conscience, the entrepreneur is merely a mercenary. Smith is a criminal whether he robs Jones directly or is hired by Robinson to do so. The market tends to be responsive to all consumer desires, licit or not. It will manufacture whatever is being demanded, whether toys for kids, hard liquor for adults who beat their kids, or atomic bombs that vaporize kids. The fault for any malfeasance is shared between both producers and consumers (which include governments). Of course, the market already embodies a measure of righteousness in its very nature in the form of the system of property rights undergirding it. So on the one hand, drug dealing may be a sin, but on the other hand there is something untoward about a businessman who arbitrarily judges which consumer desires are "virtuous" and ought to be satisfied and which are "vicious" and ought to be despised. In the actual market, most of the time, it suffices to ask one's customer simply, "What's your poison?" and promptly deliver the poison to him, not shower him with contempt for his choice of pleasure and refuse service. This way, one falls prey neither to nihilism nor to moral fanaticism.

To appreciate the ultimate power of the consumers, consider the occasional unrest among workers in various fast food joints across the U.S. CNN once reported that "the workers announced the protests outside a McDonald's in New York City, and delivered a letter that called on the fast food giant to raise wages and respect workers' rights worldwide." Such proletarian nonsense deserves a sharp rebuke. In the first place, obviously, these underlings suing for higher wages do not *have to* work at McDonald's. They can quit and ply their trade elsewhere. The very fact that they hold on to their jobs and are not eager to become unemployed indicates that they value them. It is not McDonald's that these unruly workers should blame but the *rest of society*, that is, *other entrepreneurs* who are unwilling to offer them more money for their meager skills. If there were such entrepreneurs, then in the process of competing with McDonald's for labor, they'd bid up the wages and compel McDonald's to raise wages in its own turn, via straightforward market forces, in order to retain those workers who would otherwise be leaving in droves to work for those competitors. If McDonald's *couldn't* offer higher wages in that situation, then it would

have to shrink its operations. But why can't those other businesses offer them higher pay? Because the *consumers* do not let them. They can't "pass the costs" to the consumers; if they raise their prices, then the consumers will, according to the current realities of the marketplace, quit patronizing them and go elsewhere. Any deviation from the will of the consumers is destructive for a firm.

CNN goes on: "Workers from fast food giants… have been walking off their jobs, calling on employers to pay them a minimum wage of $15 an hour and allow them to form unions without retaliation." Suppose McDonald's is paying them $10 / hour. But *I*, for example, am not paying them anything at all! Why are these "workers" upset at McDonald's and not at me? Why aren't they upset at *each other* for competing with each other and in so doing bidding down wages? We could, e.g., organize gladiatorial battles between them to cull the herd and raise wages among the survivors. If the wages are so low, why won't they start companies and themselves take advantage of the cheap labor? The consumers are kings. They decide, even if indirectly, what gets produced, how much, in what quality, by whom, etc. These peons murmur against their sovereignty and conspire against their crown. As the consumers' servant, McDonald's should discipline these lowly ungrateful flunkies up to and including firing the miscreants and hiring more pleasant staff. In short, the protesters are spitefully sabotaging the production of important physical goods and harming the welfare of the whole community. Physical goods then are the most conspicuous type of good; a great deal of our existence revolves around procuring and enjoying them.

The *rough* definition of physical goods is all the goods and services, capital goods, consumer goods, labor, land produced and sold on the market. If you value or enjoy *X* that you own and know how to use, then *X* is a physical good. *X* can even be a skill or technique you've mastered.

All such goods are relative and bound up with specific individuals. For example, there is no such thing as an objective capital good. Capital is anything that participates in a given plan of production of a particular entrepreneur. The same physical item may have multiple purposes, with different entrepreneurs being keen on employing it in different ways; this is precisely what makes factors of production partially nonspecific and useful in a variety of lines of business. The interplay of competition for each factor affects its price. Economic progress consists not insignificantly in people discovering new uses for old things. It is a question of monumental importance how to determine to what project in the über-complex totality of production each good is to be devoted, and to what extent, and how it is to be reallocated in a changing world to generate the most consumer satisfaction, and that's

one subject matter for economics.

The *precise* definition of a physical good is as follows: *X* is a physical good if and only if *X* is loved and *X* ought to be. Love is a unitive force, and when you and *X* are united, the result is pleasure. However, this criterion alone is not enough since many delectable things are set aside in the process of choice for the sake of more highly valued ends. One can't afford everything, and many delights have to be sacrificed to secure some optimal value bundle. The thing chosen ought to be according to the chooser's wishes and is a physical good, unlike the things passed up which, though still loved, ought not to be and hence are not physical goods. Some refinements are possible. *X* is a physical good if it is being enjoyed right now – say, I'm now eating a tomato which is just such a good. But also if one has the power to enjoy *X* at pleasure in the future – say, I have some tomatoes in the fridge, or if I've decided to buy some at the store tomorrow. "Ought to be" comprehends "ought to continue to be"; but the future is uncertain, and nothing being presently enjoyed is guaranteed to last – say, the light of my lamp may up and go off if the bulb suddenly burns out. To declare that *X* ought to be is not merely to *wish* for it; it's to prepare to bring it about. It is to say, "I intend / am resolved / am determined to bring *X* into existence and then enjoy it; I am working on obtaining *X*; I have paid some of the costs of the *means* to *X* and am prepared to spend still more (whatever's necessary) for the sake of achieving it, thereby demonstrating my preference in action." What ought to be must be attainable: a "desire" that the number of atoms in the solar system be even, or that 2 + 2 be 5, or that World War I had not happened is a fake desire because it cannot be assuaged by any human action. Saying "I like pie," though it evinces some "pro-attitude" toward pies, does not make pies in general physical goods; only a particular pie you are eating or planning to eat is a physical good. It is true that pies are a "consumer" good, but pies that are unsold and thrown out are not and never were physical goods. A means need not be to an actual end; it can be to a hypothetical end signified by a counterfactual like "If anyone *were* to want *X*, he'd be well advised to use *Y*." But a capital good is always a means to some *existing* end. For such means, obviously only a few definite things serve as means to any given end, so there is an objective and fixed aspect to means. However, they are subsumed to the service of subjective and arbitrary ends and therefore are ultimately subjective, too. The availability of means influences the selection of the ends; means and ends are always chosen together, since an action's aim is to maximize profit, i.e., the distance between the utility of the end and the cost of the means. Hence any given end may be abandoned if the means are found too costly in comparison with other more profitable actions. The cost of any end is *opportunity cost* or the value of the second

best option sacrificed for its sake. (Likewise, the cost of any means is the opportunity cost of forgoing using these means in other projects, that is, for the satisfaction of other ends.) We can further define physical *evil* as something which is *hated* (and hence by that fact ought not to be), such as pain or sorrow or any unsatisfactory situation that causes them. What is hated may or may not exist; if it does not exist, then it is a future evil and is *feared*. In each case, there is an incentive for a person to take steps to eliminate or prevent the physical evil and to substitute for it, upon his action, some physical good. Suppose that *X* ought to (continue to) be until tomorrow at which point it will come to be hated and hence cease to be a physical good. In this case *X* is still a physical good *right now*, but it's *imperfect* by virtue of having an aspect of physical evil. Possibly costly provisions will have to be made to neutralize this evil. The same thing can be physically good in the shorter run and evil in the longer run or vice versa. We can ask *how* good something is, and pleasure can be more or less intense, long-lasting, certain, etc., and the "hedonic calculus" in general, such as it is, can be quite complex.

Physical goods are relativized to individuals. Smith likes ice cream but detests smoked fish; Jones has the opposite preferences. When the two discuss goods, they are not, however, talking past each other or at cross-purposes. A "good" for both persons denotes the same thing: an object of choice that satisfies desires or is useful ultimately for satisfying desires.

"Narrow" happiness, by which we'll understand both (1) satisfaction of desires whatever they are and (2) pleasure, and the pursuit of which is consummated by physical goods, comprises both *success* and *fun*. Success regards achievement of a goal, with the benefit of the end outweighing the cost of the means; it is profit, perhaps monetary but ultimately psychic. It is costly work for the sake of quelling a *future* desire. Fun or play is an entertaining activity *right now* for its own sake in which there is no distinction between means and end. Play requires self-forgetfulness, work requires self-control, and the two are in conflict: the more you treat work as play, the more you focus on the here and now and the less heed you pay to the end that you seek, and vice versa. Work is to be economized on; play presumably is to be prolonged. It will be seen that to work is human, and to play is somewhat divine. Later we'll distinguish narrow from "true" happiness which is happiness rightly understood as compatible with undefiled human nature, a virtuous personality, and an intact and coherent self.

In a *Simpsons* episode, there is a scene where Homer is searching for a toy for Bart in a store called "House of Evil." The owner hands him a doll:

Store owner: Take this object – but beware, it carries a terrible curse.
Homer: Ooh, that's bad.

Owner: But it comes with a free frogurt!
Homer: That's good!
Owner: The frogurt is also cursed.
Homer: That's bad.
Owner: But you get your choice of topping!
Homer: That's good!
Owner: The toppings contain potassium benzoate.
Homer: …
Owner: That's bad.

These evaluations are physical, consequent on fulfillment of desires. The frogurt would be a consumer good, but the curse makes it unappetizing, etc. But are there goods other than physical? The answer, it turns out, is yes: there are in fact four kinds of goods, and economics which studies how man through action makes an imprint on the external world is not the only legitimate science. Ethics pertains to what we will call metaphysical goods. One such good is man himself. *Applied* ethics deals with particular moral problems, such as whether war can be just, whether abortion is permissible, or whether lying is always wrong. *Normative* ethics puts forward general moral theories, and I'll make use of a particular one here, though rest assured it will not be utilitarianism (which holds, rather outlandishly, that it is everyone's moral duty to maximize the sum total of human pleasure). And our subject, *metaethics*, inquires into the semantics of moral terms, the metaphysics of ethics (such as to what, if anything, these moral terms correspond), and the epistemology of ethics or how we come to know our duties. Metaethics further probes the questions of whether morality is objective or not, how morality motivates a person to abide by its strictures, whether the connection between morality and motivation is necessary or contingent, and the great ancient puzzle of whether it is rational to be just.

1. Stuck in the Middle with You

In order to justify our definitions of the term “good” or “goodness,” we need a full-blooded general ontology. I present the one I find plausible in this chapter without, however, an extended proof.

There are in this world on the whole three sorts of things which I arrange into “grades,” occupying one, two, or three “levels” of being. Those are: merely material objects, man (we do not need to worry about other living things), and God. This hierarchy is laid out in Table 1.

Level	Grade 1, Rocks	Grade 2, Humans	Grade 3, God
3			goodness
2		spirit	perfect spirit
1	matter	organized matter	simple matter

Table 1. The levels of objects of different grades.

1.1. Grade #1: Lawbound matter

The 1st grade of being is described by natural sciences such as physics and chemistry. It comprises all those things that strictly obey natural laws, coupled with randomness. Randomness in the material world can be divided into two kinds: quasi- and true randomness. *Quasi*-randomness is the chain of secondary causes so complex that it precludes prediction by finite intellects. It is still fully determined and hence predictable by God whose intellect is presumably all-powerful. As our power over nature grows, what was once quasi-random becomes lawlike. *True* randomness cannot be predicted at all. No one can foresee beforehand when and whether a virtual particle will pop in and out of existence, regardless of the sophistication of our instruments. Its actions are not determined by any secondary cause. It is a difficult question whether true randomness exists. Consider the following theological take on it. The particle proposes, but God disposes. God retains the power either to allow it to appear or to prevent this from happening. Such a divine intervention cannot be classified as a miracle because God does not coerce nature but simply determines a truly random event. He constrains the possibilities to either a yes or no, true or false, something that would happen anyway even without His involvement, except that He does intelligently what would otherwise happen randomly. We therefore have a trilemma. Either (1) there is no true randomness, and God lacks the power to bend and shape nature subtly; or (2) there is,

and God collapses all truly random events, which means that He intervenes constantly; or (3) He doesn't, and then He doesn't know the future. All three seem unfitting. It is not necessary here for our purposes to resolve this issue.

Chance is best apprehended as an attempt to build into unaided by reason nature a rudimentary way of solving certain easy problems by trial and error. Randomness is the intelligence of merely material objects. Biological evolution, such as it is, is precisely such a process, combining (both quasi- and truly) random mutations and a natural law, according to which fitter organisms tend to survive and prosper. Plants generate copious amounts of seeds, such that though most die, some are statistically expected to take root and flourish. A bug flies into a room through the open door and starts fluttering about wildly, obviously hoping that these (mostly) random motions will, with a bit of luck, allow it to detect the door and get back outside. If the bug were smarter, then it might be able to find its way out by thinking. But it is stupid, so it relies on the primitive random path generator to escape the trap of the room. Yet for all that, it may nevertheless *succeed*. If intelligence is ability to learn, then randomness would seem to be its opposite. Nevertheless, randomness is a kind of algorithm which "gets stuff done" and can for that reason be called *analogically* "intelligence," however low-level and crude. The bug in the example knew enough to engage its metaphorical random number generation routines to save itself from danger. Even a blind watchmaker has some IQ and tricks up his sleeve.

Nature Duality / **Motion Duality**	matter	energy
Potency	momentum	transfer
Actuality	position	propagation

Table 2. Composition of the 1st level.

Objects that are merely physical and are consigned to the 1st grade are composed of *two* aspects: nature and motion, as shown in Table 2. A particle is actually *here*, but, insofar as it is moving at least relatively, it is leaving its current position for the sake of a different one; it is potentially *there* through having momentum. A wave's act is its propagation through space; its potency is its convertibility into other forms of energy. The motion of a physical object is potency of its matter and act of its kinetic energy. Another sense of potency is receptivity to information. *Prime* matter (which is the "0th" grade) is impressed with the laws of nature which are the efficient cause of the physical universe. *Lawbound* matter has both the *material* and *efficient* causes inside it (see Section 1.4) and "knows where to go next." Lawbound matter, such as

chemical elements and their combinations, is diverse and can change forms. A puddle is actually water and potentially hydrogen and oxygen upon electrolysis. Sunlight helps trees to capture carbon which can then be burned and released back into the atmosphere. But all these things are what they are by virtue of what they do, hence they are fully described by their efficient causes. Since the natural laws seem stable, matter's potency, that is, indetermination or ability to become this or that or the other, lies further in its fitness to serve human purposes or in the malleability of its *final* cause. The natural laws are part of the *formal* cause of the world; they constitute information imparted into it as regards its functioning which material things heed faithfully and obey without fail.

The 1st grade is world-as-matter-and-motion. It encompasses everything mechanical, all machines, all inanimate objects and events that function in accordance with or come about as a result of *chance and necessity*.

1.2. Grade #2: Man

The 2nd grade begins with mere life and ends with consciousness. Its perfection lies in rationality. At this summit are the sphere of the will and its moral virtues, the intellect, and self-motion, what is commonly called the soul. It is world-as-subjective-experience. It is the "trinity within": the human bodily powers, the intellect, and the will well distinguished but without injury to man's sublimely unified nature. The meaning of "soul" can be specified variously: the animating principle, what unites the multiplicity of the body into a single person; what enjoys subjective experience; what survives physical death; the immaterial part of a man, that is, will + intellect; the thinking and feeling thing; that which is free unlike matter; whatever transcends the machine in the human person's machine-like spirit; that which can unite with others and indwell in others through love; the origin of teleological causation and of pursuit of happiness; that which chooses and acts; what comes in grades of living, growing / vegetative, sensitive, self-moving, rational, and perhaps some variations in between.

2nd-grade objects are made up of *three* aspects: nature, habits, and happiness, as summarized in Tables 3 and 4. As we can see, the 2x2 grid for rocks has been upgraded into a 3x3 grid for humans. The distinction between the grades then is that unlike rocks, humans have (a) intellect and (b) personality.

A robot may someday be programmed to simulate human behavior and learn to operate around people and be so humanlike in daily interactions that it confuses people as to what they are dealing with. But the robot will have no desires, no beliefs, no phantasms produced by the imagination, and no states of mind. Human thoughts

and feelings are apparently above the physical realm. The world-as-matter-and-energy is categorically different from the world-as-subjective-experience. These worlds are irreducible to each other. *Sensation* and *action* are bridges between the 1st-grade world and the 2nd-grade world – the former converting the world-of-matter into experience; the latter, experience into pushing around particles of matter. A priori *reflection*, too, can connect us to the outside world, though less directly. The soul is the will attached to the chakra stem which is then hooked up to the body. Sensations impinge upon the body and percolate through the attention of the composite intellect into the will; actions originate in desires and again through making plans in the intellect end up causing events in the physical world. Yet the 2nd-level world is causally isolated from the 1st-level world, though not vice versa. The intellect is *fundamentally* (though not, unlike the will, *in every respect*) immaterial. The mind is more primal than matter, such that all physical events in the brain and body are *inputs* to a man, variables based on which he chooses how to act. "The unconscious behavior of the bodily organs and cells," writes Mises, "is for the acting ego no less a datum than any other fact of the external world. Acting man must take into account all that goes on within his own body as well as other data, e.g., the weather or the attitudes of his neighbors."[1] These levels are distinguished not just in the actual world but in all possible worlds; the soul is *necessarily* immaterial or one level higher than matter.

General	Power	Intellect	Will
Procession	body (force)	words (persuasion)	feelings (on their own causally inefficacious)
Visibility	public	semi public	private
Union Possible?	no, bodies are private properties	in part, through conversation	yes, through love
Nature	Trinity		
Pursuit	doing one's duty	discovery of law	escaping hatred
Enjoyment	having rights	understanding fellow men	mutual disinterestedness
Virtue	fear of the law	wisdom	love of friendship, charity

Table 3. The human "trinities within," Part I.

It is impermissible, for example, to say things like "drinking coffee caused Smith to get to work." All the physical and biological effects of drinking coffee, just as all (outer) sensations and (inner)

reflections, are materials out of which Smith weaves a decision about what to do. Drinking coffee provided some kind of inducement for him to get to work, a lure, but he was the one who decided to give in to that inducement (perhaps having weighed it against other reasons). Decision-making is part of any human action. Though an action can fail, at least an attempt to succeed is part of the <desire, plan, execution> triple. Sensations then influence the soul but do not determine action. But the reverse, "actions influence the body but do not determine sensation," is false, since an action is often undertaken precisely in order to induce or block a sensation.

	Power	Intellect	Will
Personality Trinity			
Pursuit	self-construction & discovery	moral ideal	2nd-order desire
Enjoyment	being one's own man, self-ownership	seeing oneself in the true light, self knowledge	contentment with oneself
Cardinal Virtue	temperance	justice	self-love
Narrow Happiness Trinity			
Pursuit	execution	plan	1st order desire
Enjoyment	possession of it, comprehension	contemplation of what one has, vision	contentment with the world, fruition
Cardinal Virtue	courage	prudence	love of concupiscence

Table 4. The human "trinities within," Part II.

In order to get a handle on our species, it helps to endorse the following two points. First, that the combined whole human action (HA) of any instance of willing, deciding, and acting is a real event. It has a definition, an essence; it means something; it has a variety of important consequences, especially for the originator of the HA. It is not an "illusion" or "a maelstrom of events distributed across the brain [that] compete for attention; and as one process outshoots the others, the brain rationalizes the outcome after the fact and concocts the impression that a single self was in charge all along,"[2] whatever that gibberish of a sentence means. (If there is a feeling of a "single self" being had somewhere, then the thing feeling *is* a single self, the feeling authenticates itself and cannot therefore be illusory. Further, an illusion means that someone is deceived. In order for *X* to be deceived, *X* has to

be a person and single self which then is no illusion; if nothing is a single self, then no one can be deceived and again there is no illusion.) Second, that material events impact HAs but do not determine them. It follows that "mind" could not have arisen from "matter" by "evolution" or any other means. Matter exists for the sake of and is used by the mind in sensation, reflection, and action; matter constrains the mind; but within those constraints the mind is autonomous and supreme.

1.2.1. Darwinian distraction

Some people today who call themselves "evolutionary biologists" make bold claims about the "origin of species." First, they argue, billions of years ago, primitive nano-replicators (a placeholder of a word, since no information is provided about how these replicators worked) arose, by an unknown process, from the primordial soup whose content is also left unspecified. Step by tiny step, exclusively by way of the Darwinian evolution, that is, random variation and natural selection – an unverifiable and, in light of molecular biology, barbaric hypothesis – these replicators clothed themselves with more and more complex biological garb, and though these outer shells seemed (or perhaps not for the "evolutionary biologists," I don't know) to have acquired interesting functions, the replicators, now called genes, have remained in full control. The human body and soul, despite their fantastic involution, are mere vehicles for gene reproduction.

In short, we, along with all other living beings, are *used* by genes in order for these genes to spread themselves. When Homer was composing the *Odyssey*, or when the Wright brothers were inventing the airplane, they, without their knowledge or conscious consent, were in fact furthering the continuation of their genetic patterns – in short, attracting girls. A cruder metaphysic than this (call it "genetic determinism") can scarcely be imagined.

Genes, being simple replicators, have apparently contrived to procreate in astonishingly roundabout ways. As George in *Seinfeld* muses, "I'd like to have a kid. Of course, you have to have a date first." Reproduction for humans seems to begin with *dinner and a movie*. Did genes create the computers which were used to make special effects in this action movie our couple is now watching? They had to, as this must have been part of their wildly circuitous scheme to get them to mate. Every accouterment of civilization is designed to encourage sex and care for the children by human parents. Skipping past a couple of mysterious breakups, a heartless abortion, the strange artifice of a Catholic sacrament, a life-threatening birth, we have a newborn. He is completely helpless and demands years of attention in order to reach puberty and himself reproduce. Is the child studying math? Is he playing catch? These, too, are part of the genes' grand master plan to propagate

themselves. Perhaps playing is a gene-ordered exercise that keeps the sexual organs in good health. When the boy grows up, technology will have advanced, and he and his girlfriend will enjoy dinner and a *video game*, which evidently make reproduction so much more efficient. Nothing human beings do, unless caused by a destructive random mutation, falls outside the imperative of their genes to spread themselves, including the Darwinians' making arguments in favor of the adequacy of evolution. These arguments, too, are tools that genes cunningly use to make the Darwinians more popular with the opposite sex. It seems that we are brains-in-vats or puppets, and if genes are not gods, then they are at least evil geniuses defining and controlling our life experiences. Far from exerting self-ownership, we are *possessed by* genes and are exorcised only by death.

Richard Dawkins, drunk on Darwinism, proclaims: "We are survival machines – robot vehicles blindly programmed to preserve the selfish molecules known as genes."[3] The idea of a "selfish gene" evokes the picture of genes deviously at every moment plotting and planning to multiply endlessly. Unfortunately, this is just a silly anthropomorphism. Genes are chemical substances. They do not have interests, pursue ends, selfish or not, or plot and plan. They don't "care" if they replicate or not. At most, genes set the stage by building the body of a human being who desires sexual intercourse. Nor does the person himself care if his genes replicate or not; at most he will fancy having a large family. In addition, "selfishness" would seem to be about the particular gene not its copies: how would a gene "benefit" if it makes copies of itself, however numerous, though it itself dies (or rather, since it's an inanimate object, breaks)?

Genes are ascribed the propensity to snowball like a virus or grow like cancer, yet every creature on earth fills a definite, and often very small, niche in the ecosystem. How can unbridled genetic rapacity result in modest reproduction strategies? Suppose there was a random mutation among some species of deer in some habitat that would up its reproduction rate 100-fold. The deer would devour all the food, disease would run rampant among them from overpopulation, etc., and the entire species might perish. So such a mutation would decrease rather than enhance fitness. Genes are selfish in that they *would* spread like wildfire *if they could*, but their environment sets strict limits on what they can get away with. So, the genes end up content with something much less than conquering the world. But then they can no longer be considered so dominating. The genes do their thing, and the creatures whose genes they are do their own. The creatures are not so consumed with the fervor to reproduce that they seek nothing else.

I once was in a park with my uncle and saw some beavers swimming around in the lake. I asked, "What do you think they are

doing?" And my uncle replied, "They are enjoying life." Could *that* be the purpose of genes? To specify the bodily constitution of creatures who might seek and perhaps find some kind of happiness in life, of which offspring is an important but strictly subordinate part? Consider the Aristotelian four causes. What is the final cause of a beaver? Many people answer, its progeny. The reason why the beaver was made and lives is so that it could make little baby beavers. Very well, what is the final cause of those baby beavers? Apparently, also to reproduce and make the first beaver a grandfather. And so on, ad infinitum. The obvious problem is that the chain of final causes does not terminate. *A* is for the sake of *B*; *B* is for the sake of *C*, … Every creature is instrumental, existing for the sake of something else; no creature is intrinsically valuable. Therefore, this answer cannot be right. The final cause of a beaver, the reason why it was made, most plausibly, is its own enjoyment of its own life. We might also argue that animals exist for the sake of *human* happiness, insofar as we are the sort of creatures who naturally and cleverly use animals for our own ends, which also terminates the final causation properly. Animals exist for the sake of their own pleasure per se, and for the sake of human pleasure per accidens. Again, my cousin's family owns several cats. I was at their house once and saw one of the cats sitting by the entrance door; my cousin opened the door, and the cat slunk out. I asked, "What's she doing out there?" He replied, "She's chillin'." I stood enlightened.

Plants and many animals do not exercise any care for their young, leaving them to fend for themselves. Animals mate, driven by a powerful instinct, and birth occurs naturally as an afterthought. Surely, we can argue that in such cases, animals purposively seek the pleasures of orgasm. Perhaps their genes have programmed them to do so, but the teleological causation cannot be dispensed with. Animals *want* sex, and they will go to many hardships in order to obtain this good. It is certainly lucky for the species that sexual delight leads to the conception and birth of a new generation, but why should fish and spiders care? Again, they do not desire children but sex. (How many humans would agree?) What of the animals who expend a lot of energy nurturing their young, like cheetahs and penguins? Perhaps they do enjoy having cubs around. But those critters do not care about what sort of "persons" their progeny will become. If asked, "What do you want of your kids?" they might indeed say, if they could talk: "Survive and reproduce," although I see no reason why a cheetah might not wish that her cubs have some fun, too. But ask a human father what he would want for his son, and he would probably say, "To make me proud" or "To achieve the things I never had" or "To do greater things than I did in life." Greatness is scarcely measured by how many children one has. He probably would not say, "Have as many children as you can physically beget (while

escaping supporting them).” Reproduction is part of human life but not nearly as overpowering as the Darwinians would have it.

It seems crystal clear that human beings seek *happiness*, not vast numbers of children, and moreover they seek happiness in ways that “evolution” has not anticipated. We may have evolved in a jungle, but it was a real jungle not an urban one. In the writings of genetic determinists, we repeatedly see sentences like “evolution did not prepare us” for such and such modern environment. If it did not prepare us, then how were we able to create that environment and find comfort in it? How is the writer who has identified evolution as inadequate or “sloppy” himself able to overcome the limitations that supposedly plague mankind as a whole? If evolution failed to prepare everyone, then why is the writer making an exception for himself?

Allan Gibbard (whose metaethical noncognitivism we’ll discuss later) writes: “If I know that my evolutionary *telos* is to reproduce my genes, that in itself gives me no reason for wanting many descendants, nephews, and nieces, or for caring specially for my kin because they share my genes – nor, of course, a reason to the contrary.”[4] He balks at reducing all human affairs to survival and reproduction. But then this statement comes down simply to the fact that human beings are eager to have sex as one end among the immense variety that they pursue, in which case I don’t know why we need “evolutionary theory” to make an observation so obvious. As with reproduction, so with survival: Sidgwick, e.g., finds it “notorious” that “civilized men take pleasure in various forms of unhealthy conduct and find conformity to the rules of health irksome; … they… are susceptible of keen pleasure from acts and processes that have no material tendency to preserve life.”[5] Gibbard goes on: “Human goals tend toward biological fitness, toward reproduction. The point is not, of course, that a person’s sole goal is to maximize his reproduction; few if any people have that as a goal at all.”[6] But they *would* have this goal if genetic determinism were true; that they do not is therefore evidence against it. The cavemen, Gibbard continues, “tended to want the various things it was fitness-enhancing for them to want.” To this fantastic – and self-evidently false – assertion I can only reply with David Stove’s conclusion about what Darwinism *in fact* teaches: “Nearly everything about us, or at least nearly everything which distinguishes us from flies, fish, or rodents – all the way from practicing Abortion to studying Zoology – puts some impediment or other in the way of our having as many descendants as we could. From the point of view of Darwinism, just as from the point of view of Calvinism, *there is no good in us*, or none worth mentioning. We are a mere festering mass of biological errors.”[7, a] Yeager (2001), for example, really has to pick one: either humans seek happiness and hence treat ethics through the lens of economics (as he wishes), or they seek to

breed like rabbits and treat it from the Darwinian perspective. Because it is crushingly obvious that the pursuit of reproduction and the pursuit of happiness *are in deadly conflict*. Darwinian reproduction is an almost fully mechanical *physical* process: genes replicate themselves, though in a weird indirect multistage fashion. The search for happiness, on the other hand, instantiates an expressly human *teleological* process. No wonder these often act at cross-purposes. Mises puts it this way: "Man integrates the satisfaction of the purely zoological impulses, common to all animals, into a scale of values, in which a place is also assigned to specifically human ends. Acting man also rationalizes the satisfaction of his sexual appetites. Their satisfaction is the outcome of a weighing of pros and cons. Man does not blindly submit to a sexual stimulation like a bull; he refrains from copulation if he deems the costs – the anticipated disadvantages – too high."[8] The very purpose of the virtues of fortitude and temperance, for example, is to check the body's drive to survive and reproduce. Gibbard's attempts to insinuate that even "unconditional benevolence" and "moral inspiration" toward "special sanctity" are compatible with the Darwinian paradigm are both heroic and pathetic at the same time. Human fellowship, too, is supposedly explained by Darwinism: "The desire [for communion] plays a social role… It serves to mesh feelings. Meshed feelings coordinate actions, and coordinated actions make for cooperation and keep conflict from being ruinous. In part this is a matter of what caused us, evolutionarily, to be the kinds of beings who crave fellow feeling."[9] In other words, to imitate Karl Marx, "Reproduce, reproduce! That is Moses and the prophets!" The ultimate motivation for this nonsense must be that Darwinism cannot possibly be wrong because it allegedly enables its adherent to be an intellectually consistent atheist; hence every counterexample must, despite appearances, somehow fit within this theory. Incidentally, if all the references to Darwinism, including absurdities like the above, were excised from Gibbard's *Wise Choices*, nothing whatever as pertains to metaethics would be lost; nothing in his study really depends on this doctrine. It's almost as if Gibbard is paying obeisance to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, lest his book be censored and he, condemned as a heretic.

Daniel Goleman writes about his feeling fear during a sudden snowstorm that prompted him to stop and wait it out: "The caution fear forced on me that day may have saved my life. Like a rabbit frozen in terror at the hint of a passing fox – or a protomammal hiding from a marauding dinosaur – I was overtaken by an internal state that compelled me to stop, pay attention and take heed of a coming danger."[10] Notice first how evolutionists are believers in mythical creatures like "protomammals." No one has ever seen a protomammal, nor even explained exactly what sort of thing a protomammal is, but

such things *had* to have existed, because evolution, if it occurred, the fanatics believe, proceeded, as per Darwin, via "numerous, successive, slight modifications." But it did occur, *obviously*. Hence there must have been plenty of protomammals and in fact proto-everything around in the past. Indeed, evolutionary theory falsely predicts a world in which all species *right now* shade into each other by imperceptible degrees. Gibbard similarly asks, "Why might linguistic ability have been fitness-enhancing in protohumans?"[11] What on earth are protohumans? Australian aborigines? Again we have a word that has no content because no one fathoms what "protohumans" were, or whether. The fact is, from natural reason, we have no idea "where we came from" any more than where we are going, on the levels of both the species and individual. The very word "evolve" in, to take a random example from Gibbard, "We evolved to have flexible genetic propensities – propensities to be affected profoundly in response to culture,"[12] is a meaningless black hole. From what did these propensities allegedly evolve? Through what intermediate stages? What exact changes occurred in our bodies (and perhaps souls) through each stage including on the molecular level? Darwinists are silent on such questions. Saying that "we evolved to be *X*" introduces no new insights in addition to "we are *X*." Why not say simply "We *have* flexible genetic propensities…" *which means the exact same thing* and leave evolution to the pseudoscientists?

Second, let a sophisticated robot drive the car. The robot senses a snowstorm and stops. You might say, entirely metaphorically, it "feared" an accident. Here of course there is no feeling, no teleological causation. Goleman makes it appear as if fear is meant to be a makeshift subjective broker between objective danger and objective action. The "purpose" of this passion that evolution has implanted into us is to keep us safe. But from the evolutionary point of view, why have this mystical go-between? It's a clear waste of resources. A robot for which there is a direct physical link between storm and stopping seems far more efficient and simpler and would have an evolutionary advantage over humans.

Now let the robot successfully avoid all problems on the road and get to its destination. Goleman may have felt happy at that point. The robot would not feel anything; it's a machine. Our author can no longer even say that the subjective happiness is for the sake of anything objective, such as survival and reproduction. This is because happiness is the final end of all human endeavors. All objective human action is entirely for the sake of subjective felicity. How could the evolution of matter – atoms, molecules, chemical elements – have resulted in the elevation of happiness to the ultimate relative given? He goes on: "With anger blood flows to the hands, making it easier to grasp a weapon or strike at a foe; heart rate increases, and a rush of hormones such as

adrenaline generates a pulse of energy strong enough for vigorous action."[13] I am sure this is a real connection. But anger both is a different referent and has a different meaning than "blood flows." Anger is not "really" a rush of hormones. It is a spiritual phenomenon unique to higher animals and in its specific form to humans. It is a subjective private feeling not objective public action. Nor does anger mean in common speech "rush of hormones." It means "antagonism, outrage," etc. I suppose that for Goleman, love, too, is "overrated; biochemically no different than eating large quantities of chocolate," to quote from the movie *Devil's Advocate*. (This is true enough: *biochemically* it may well be no different; both sensual and intellectual love and pleasure may be implemented in the same way in the body. But there is more to both enjoying chocolate and love which are at the very least human *subjective experiences* than biochemistry; and there is more to love than sensual pleasure.) Our author does not disappoint: "Love, tender feelings, and sexual satisfaction entail parasympathetic arousal – the physiological opposite of the 'fight-or-flight' mobilization shared by fear and anger. The parasympathetic pattern, dubbed the 'relaxation response,' is a bodywide set of reactions that generates a general state of calm and contentment, facilitating cooperation."[14] Love, too, then, is for the sake of survival and reproduction. It is an intermediate emotion that compels actions beneficial to the organism. What a strange device. But of course it compels nothing. Going back to fear, Goleman explicitly recounts his emotions. He was not pushed by them ineluctably but reckoned them to be inputs to his mind that had to be contemplated and weighed along with every other like input, such as perhaps the fact that he was going to be late. Stopping was a choice, a conscious decision. Goleman *allowed* his fear to influence him.

At any rate, the word "benefit" has a teleological meaning. It cannot be decoupled from happiness or pleasure of some kind. Dawkins is consistent in this regard, denying that there is any such thing as final causation. Viruses "are here because they are here because they are here. … Flowers and elephants are 'for' the same thing as everything else in the living kingdoms, for spreading Duplicate Me programs written in DNA language. Flowers are for spreading copies of instructions for making more flowers. Elephants are for spreading copies of instructions for making more elephants."[15] Of course, that is just another way of saying that neither flowers nor elephants are for anything. Thus, to my proposal that the cat's body suggested to her a pleasure, namely, to cool off, Goleman and Dawkins would retort that the feeling was for the sake of the promotion of optimal metabolism, and the sophistication of the body itself is explained as that if the cat were constructed poorly, then it would have died long before reproducing, and so its species would not exist now in the first place.

The apparent goal-directedness then is due to the evolutionary process. Without gainsaying that desires can (and for humans often should) be life-affirming, call this a conflict of visions, only one of which is sound.

Marc Hauser describes how vampire bats assist each other by occasionally regurgitating blood to feed their fellows. “80% [of cases] were between mother and infant. … there is no puzzle: Regurgitating to your offspring makes sense, since you share half of your genes with them…”[16] But makes sense to whom? To human scholars enraptured by the Darwinian theory, maybe. Certainly not to the bats. Or does Hauser believe that bats are familiar with the science of biology and consciously pursue the end of maximizing their evolutionary fitness? Perhaps he thinks that bats are mechanical automata who are shoved around by their genes in the manner in which man-made tools in manufacturing are manipulated via computer numerical control. Could it be instead that mother bats *feel* the bat equivalent of *love* for their offspring whom they recognize, and this is what motivates them to care for them? Of course, bats are moved by instinct not reason, but even instinct is essentially teleological not physical.

Darwinians find themselves with an argument like the following:

1. Genes replicate.
2. Human beings are complex robots controlled by genes so that the genes may replicate.
3. But humans apparently seek happiness in life.
4. Happiness is an illusion foisted on people by genes when people behave in a manner that promotes gene replication.
5. Therefore, for example, when a child in one family is snatched away by another family, the first family always rejoices, because this frees them from their burdensome duty to care for that child and therefore to reproduce and spread their genes around still more.

Even when pointed out that (5) is obviously false, the Darwinians never quite realize that this throws (4) and (2) into question.

Genetic determinism might be able to explain why a young person wants to have sex; it cannot explain why that young person goes on to found Ford, or why some people choose to renounce sex and become Catholic priests. It is not as if those who fail to launch a successful company are disadvantaged in the alleged red in tooth and claw competition in the world. Sex may be accounted for, but why do people fall in love with their sexual partners? Biologically, love seems deeply superfluous. Every animal seems to do fine without it. Could it be a uniquely human spiritual marvel that lifts us up to deiform joy rather than (I guess) an evolutionary subterfuge to ensure that people stay loyal to their mates? Some people commit suicide. Why do they do that,

contrary to their genetic blueprint to survive and reproduce? Presumably, because for them, *life is no fun*. A certain decent amount of present happiness or hope for future happiness is then essential to survival. Already this looks senseless from the point of view of genes. Why saddle existence with something so fabulous and difficult as the quest to improve one's lot in life which may consist in, get this: studying philosophy! It is plain that for humans, *survival* (in the widest sense of doing the things that constitute living) *conflicts with reproduction*. The Catholic Church even finds a cause for concern over this: human reproduction, it says, is properly in the hands of God, because it benefits the species often at the expense (both figurative and literal) of the individual. Too much narrow selfishness on the part of the existing humans, and there will be no new generation at all. Hence, the moral strictures against birth control and suchlike.

"Economists" declare: you *think* people strive toward holiness and virtue, but *in fact* they are just in it for the money. "Evolutionists" do them one better: you think people want to earn money, but in fact they are just jerked around by their genes for reproduction. Let us steer clear of such unworthy cynicism.

Suppose, as many people reasonably believe, that human beings have naturally immortal souls. In that case, *spiritual* survival which yields eternal life and beatitude takes center stage. *Physical* survival is now purely instrumental, inasmuch as it aids soul-making: the creation of human nature, personality, and happiness. As Wallace says in the movie *Braveheart*, "Every man dies; not every man really lives." Finally, *reproduction* becomes a mere addendum, resorted to insofar as a person feels that association with and rearing of children will enrich his life. Most people plan their families and limit the number of children they give life to precisely so that their standard of living is not impaired too much. They thereby explicitly privilege their welfare over their reproductive capacity. The wealthy do not necessarily have more children than the poor, suggesting that caring for children is such a demanding job that they would rather do something else that is more exciting. Etc., with no end in sight. In any case, genes are physical molecules, whereas humans are ultimately spirits. 1st-level events generally do not determine 2nd-level ones. Teleological causality cannot evolve from physical causality, any more than life can come from nonlife.

1.2.2. Immateriality of the intellect

Expressions such as that men are "ghosts in the machine" or that they are "spiritual machines" are misleading. The "machine" is subservient to and is an aspect of the "ghost" in the form of bodily power through which men manipulate matter in the world, a way of

looking at the spirit that emphasizes the spirit's mechanical attributes. We are not at all spiritual machines but *machine-like spirits* or spirits whose operation depends to an extent upon laws of physics, chemistry, biology, and the rest, even though, more fundamentally, the spirits have wills and intellects and control rather than are controlled by their bodies. Though 2nd-grade creatures, human beings have 1st-level characteristics. It is proper to man, i.e., to his nature, to have power over the physical world. This power is exercised through the body which via a mysterious link connects to the mind (as part of the chakra system), and the latter, no less enigmatically, to the will. That power is not the whole of man. For example, humans virtually convert power into pleasure, the cost of bodily exertion into the revenue of delight or joy or both, what we call psychic profit for the will. Man is not so much an animated body as an embodied soul, a soul that through the body is capable both of influencing and of being affected by the material world.

Subjective experience is all we humans have. To say that is not to abjure the reality of human *nature* which hosts the experience or of human *habits* and *character* which shape the experience, but to point out that experience, the process of living, completes and expresses those things. Of course, if there is any experiencing going on, then something distinct from the experience must be doing the experiencing. And the same stimuli will be reacted to differently by different people. However, a man enjoying a dreamless sleep retains his nature and personality, but he is not at that time being truly human. Sleep is a sacrifice imposed on us by our bodies, but if it were converted into a coma that lasted until the person died, then we would consider that to be in a sense a fate worse than death. Such a person is alive neither here nor in the hereafter. *Abstractions from experience*, such as reductions of it to bodily states governed by mechanically tractable forces, are only one of many ways of viewing experience. It is not just "I think, therefore, I am" but "I think, I feel, and I act, and my thoughts and feelings and pursuits are, together with my humanity and personality, me or the *whole me*." The "whole me" is not the "mechanical aspect of me." I am not identical to my own body. Some reductions of the whole to a part I have encountered are truly amazing; thus, one person opined that humans are "really" "nothing more" than "electrical impulses miraculously held together in incredibly complex patterned arrays." I replied to him with a few of my own in a, well, reductio: Humans are actually "nothing more" than inefficient computers. Wait, that's not right, they are "nothing more" than waste-producing factories. No, no, they are "nothing more" than, in Sterelny and Fraser's (2016) words, "modified great apes" (in the same sense perhaps in which an airplane is just a modified toaster?). So much more tough-minded, aren't I?

Steven Landsburg, for example, believes that "the dividing line

between ‘heart’ and ‘lungs’… is a human invention; at the molecular level, your body is a teeming mass of trillions of particles, with no natural division between ‘heart particles’ and ‘lung particles.’ Our brains *create* a clear distinction between lungs and hearts, and the science of biology enshrines that distinction, even though it’s not a fundamental aspect of reality.”[17] Isn’t a “brain” also a mass of particles? What makes it special that *it* is able to create an intellectual distinction between itself, the heart, and the lungs, while the heart and lungs remain incapable of doing so? He then demotes biology to chemistry (plus “baggage”), chemistry to physics, and physics to math. Math then is for Landsburg the ultimate reality. Now that’s nonsense. The ultimate (relative to man) reality is human subjective experience of grappling with the world. There are elements of it that exhibit certain regularities. When we focus on these regularities and thereby abstract away from the blooming buzzing confusion of immediate qualia, we build up science which indeed includes math that models laws of nature. And there are truths proper to tigers *as* tigers and not as swirling clouds of atoms; proper to hearts and lungs as biological organs and not as collections of chemical elements; proper to metals or noble gases as such elements and not to the protons and electrons of physics. Landsburg’s reductions of highly nontrivial substances to their purely material causes (indeed to prime matter) are unhelpful. We do not get closer to “fundamental reality” by denying the self-evident truth of propositions like “this is a car,” “this is a lung,” “this is a human being” and instead insisting that all these are “really” “teeming masses” of atoms. Landsburg is unfortunately seduced by the barbarian syllogism that (1) the mind is mysterious and complex; and (2) the brain is mysterious and complex; therefore, (3) the mind is the brain. Suppose, however, for the sake of argument that I am wrong that soul and body are necessarily distinct. Suppose in fact that materialism is true in the actual world, and all phenomena can be reduced to physical matter and motion. That still does not entail that all *sciences* can or at least should be reduced to *physics*. Reductionism does not entail scientism. Therefore, Landsburg is still all wet: psychology, economics, ethics are not “math.”

One reason to postulate a real immaterial or spiritual substance is that real material substances cannot (it so seems) interact or make use of ideal or abstract objects. Ideal objects are “the whole Platonic pantheon of universals, properties, kinds, propositions, numbers, sets, states of affairs, and possible worlds,” to use Alvin Plantinga’s list. They also include phantasms dreamt up in the imagination, such as a unicorn one might picture in his mind. Abstract objects are building blocks of information (or *form* as distinct from matter) or information itself. Ideal objects are thus distinguished from real objects; and real material objects are distinguished from real spirits; these are different pairs.

Thus, angels are pure immaterial spirits; but the number 2 is neither material nor immaterial but rather ideal or capable of existing in the mind. Nevertheless, there is an affinity between real spirits and ideal abstracta; at the limit it may be that God's mind is a perfect unity of the real or concrete and ideal or abstract: God is a mind-in-the-act-of-self-contemplation realized as a thought thinking itself. The real mind is the Father; the thought is the Holy Spirit; and the ideal essence grasped by the thought is the Son – three things equal in greatness, yet one God. When thinking, we manipulate ideal objects in our minds. For example, we discover the truth of *q* by knowing "if *p*, then *q*" and *p*. And perhaps like the Holy Spirit, our thoughts, to the extent that their contents (such as the propositions they express) have meanings, too, are alive.

It is impossible to read a person's mind by scanning his brain. One may have better luck trying to divine the will of the gods by studying the entrails of a chicken. Real physical things like tables and chairs and indeed brain states are finite; real spiritual things are potentially infinite – they are finite at any given time but can enjoy everlasting improvement. But the substance of thoughts, such as propositions that we can entertain or other abstract objects, are actually infinitely varied: $2 + 2 = 4$, $3 + 3 = 6$, … Not only that, but they are also infinite to an infinite degree – they are aleph-aleph-null. Real things have essences; they have a past and may have a future; ideal things that subsist in the mind have no essences and are timeless. An actual fat man in the doorway has a definite essence; a possible fat man in the doorway does not; hence, for example, the notions of identity do not apply to ideal abstracta. A line drawn in the sand was generated and can corrupt; the proposition "A straight line may be drawn between any two points" is not in time at all. It does not proceed from the past through the present into the future. (Note the difference between timelessness and divine eternity: the latter is a roll-up or perfectly unified package of all 4 time periods: past, present, future, and timelessness, the moment of super-concentrated life of God, not mere timelessness alone.)

The intellectual power of synthesis, as distinct from analysis, induction, and deduction, allows us to grasp a real object from a multitude of its appearances. Thus, the brain, etc. are just one of the numerous ways in which a person is present to us; it's how the spirit appears to us via our senses. The body is part of the essence of man as "power" insofar as a separated soul is not fully human. But the soul is one level higher than the body, and in this sense the body is a means to an end. It is through the soul that the body is unified. Materialists fail to "synthesize a manifold." Of note is the fact that synthesis is performed by the mind, and unless the mind itself were one, it could not unify anything. The unity of the soul is the cause of the unity of concrete objects in the understanding. I will even strengthen my claim: that a

certain brain activity is correlated with the subjective experiences of thoughts and feelings does not detract from the point that this fact is merely a – no doubt to the utmost degree curious and important – accident of our nature. It is conceivable that the same experiences and even whole lives could have been produced by vastly different designs of the human body and its environment. The body is a handmaiden to the soul, the dirt or "dust" in Gen 3 into which the soul is planted.

For example, a possible case against the government's drinking and driving laws consists in the fact that a scientific oddity, namely, the blood alcohol content, a fully 1st-level property, is alleged to *cause* lack of control or a 2nd-level property. The reasoning is that alcohol clouds the mind thereby severing the drunk from reality, which in turn makes for poor driving. In other words, things are almost as if a bottle of vodka were driving the car, maliciously doing a bad job of it. But in fact there is no causation either way, at most there is correlation. Alcohol need not impair a driver's thinking and driving ability; and even a drunken haze need not automatically output a "kill that pedestrian" instruction. But in order to be guilty of a crime, a man must cause or threaten to cause injury to another. If a motorist *is* driving erratically, then he can be ticketed as a threat to public safety, whether he is drunk or not, in order to deter such behavior. But if he is driving fine, it is a travesty of justice to punish him for a mere physiological condition.

Confident assertions of metaphysical materialist monism can be deflected with a simple argument to the following effect:

1. We do not know, and are not even close to finding out, how the soul and the body are linked, i.e., the nature of the dual connection of the intellect to (1) the body and (2) the will. Explaining consciousness is not in vain dubbed in philosophy "the hard problem."
2. Suppose the contrary: hard-boiled monism is true. "There ain't no such thing as the soul."
3. But then the mind and body are connected in the most intimate way possible, namely, by being numerically identical to each other.
4. Therefore, the monist claims to know exactly how the soul and the body are connected.
5. Which contradicts (1).
6. Therefore, monism is only an opinion, a metaphysical hypothesis, nothing more. Far from being a dogmatic foregone conclusion, it doesn't even qualify as a starting point in our investigation since belief in the soul is commonplace in "folk psychology."

Of course, a dualist would not be stymied by this argument,

because he is free to maintain that the soul and body have both different meanings (which the monist may admit) and different referents (which the monist cannot admit), while disclaiming any knowledge of how the two are united. For example, Merriam-Webster defines "mind" as "the element or complex of elements in an individual that feels, perceives, thinks, wills, and especially reasons"; and "brain" as "the portion of the vertebrate central nervous system enclosed in the skull and continuous with the spinal cord…" Plainly, these could not be more different. Whether they nevertheless pick out the same object is a separate question (to which I think the answer is no).

One might speculate that the mind is an "emergent property" of the brain. Perhaps the relationship of mind to brain is like the relationship of high heat to a complex machine: the motion of each part of the machine generates a bit of heat, yet on the whole the machine generates a lot of heat, perhaps enough to interfere with its operation. Here the high heat is not found in any part, in the motion of any part, or in the stationary machine as a whole, but only in the working machine as a whole. But though high heat is indeed an emergent property of the machine in this sense, it belongs to the machine. Perhaps the high heat is concentrated in the box in which the machine is housed, as the mind seems to reside within the skull. Since matter and energy are part of the same 1st-grade world, and temperature is mean molecular kinetic energy, heat is simply another part of the machine. This is very different from the metaphysical status of will and intellect, for which the materialist's unenviable task is to show how the highly peculiar to human beings phenomena can be accounted for by the travails of matter and energy.

Perhaps the mind lurks, as A.N. Whitehead with sort of idiotic earnestness thought, in the "interstices of the brain," just as the hot air permeates the space in between the machine parts. It is obvious that this is mere wordplay; the point is, according to the monist, that there is *some* pound of flesh occupying *some* part of the three-dimensional space in the human body to which the soul is identical. And that is too ambitious a statement to flaunt casually.

Insoluble problems appear even if the mind is admitted to be real and immaterial but is claimed to be a mysterious "side effect" of the goings-on in the brain. There might not be an identity between the mind and body, but there can be no change in the mental state without a change in the physical state, or in other words, the same physical state results in the same mental states. This supervenience of the mental on the physical is not an a priori thesis, nor is there a posteriori evidence (such as from neuroscience or biology) for it. As Mises points out in a striking refutation, "for a doctrine asserting that thoughts are in the same relation to the brain in which gall is to the liver, it is not more

permissible to distinguish between true and untrue ideas than between true and untrue gall."[18] Supervenience of this sort is self-defeating, in that it holds beliefs to depend solely on the motions of atoms (or suchlike) in the brain, i.e., nonrational forces, which make beliefs unjustified regardless of their content and denude reason of its ability to support even non-reductionist materialism. (Reppert (2003) has a full discussion of this and similar arguments.) Aside from these points, it is yet another hypothesis, and an odd one, since we are regaled with no details about how a mind is supposed to pop out of the brain. Materialists are witches and warlocks who chant: "Eye of newt, and toe of frog, Wool of bat, and tongue of dog," etc., and spirits are magically conjured up. In short, the mind is not a side effect or emergent property or epiphenomenon of matter; it's a real, if immaterial, thing, at least the indigo and violet chakras taken together.

Materialists seem to confuse the material and formal causes of the mind. When asked: "Of what is the intellect made?" it would undoubtedly be correct to answer: "In part of the brain and its constituents." But when asked: "What is the intellect?" it does not take a philosopher to see that answering, "The brain" or "What sends electrical signals to and from the body" is not particularly helpful. A house is built out of bricks and cement and wood and roof tiles, but a house is not a brick or even a set of bricks. A house is a place where human beings live. Similarly, the mind is a thinking thing; it *consists* of C-fibers occasionally firing; but it *is hardly* the C-fibers.

Consider then the idea of human *presence*. Presence in general is a kind of awareness. A man can be aware of an object, in which case that object would be "close" to him; of another subject, and now that subject is "closer" still; or of himself, and one would be "closest" to himself. People seem to be present to one in a way that merely physical things are not. As Peter Kreeft puts it, persons are "here"; things are "there."[19] Presence is a special way of attracting attention to oneself, a power to command being noticed which are absent in a thing or nonhuman animal. One cannot use people the way he uses things without hearkening to the person's well-being or desires. Smith is present to Jones in the sense that Jones stands ready to recognize Smith for any contribution to the world, no matter how small, and is himself in need of similar treatment. There may be a bond of affection between them, a union of minds and hearts, or, at the very least, mindfulness of each other's humanity, rationality, specialness, value and delicacy, a unique kind of mutual usefulness perhaps, possibility of friendship, possibility of admiring the person present, and suchlike. To adapt an understanding of Richard Weaver, presence stands for the fact that "one separates man out from other beings and regards his destiny as something no member of humankind should be indifferent to."[20] Acknowledging presence is

not yet feeling love, because a person may respond to the presence of other human beings with hatred or loathing, but it is necessary for love. The moral rule "Do not treat human beings as things" must be lost on the materialist philosopher, making him a stone-cold brute.

Robert Nozick asks what makes something a person. He says that it is "being an I," a self. Unfortunately, "being an I" is hardly illuminating. Does it mean self-awareness? But animals, too, especially higher apes, can apparently recognize themselves, say, in a mirror. They must have a sense, however attenuated, of their identity. For Nozick, persons are, in particular, "value-seeking selves." Let me be charitable to our author and interpret him as saying that personality involves seeking happiness ("values"). But that is true not just of humans but of all animals, indeed, of all life. All animals, too, go after their version of happiness. In following the sun, even the sunflower fulfills its needs. "However," Nozick continues, "does not the different game of 'pursue and kill the value-seeking I' treat another as a value-seeking I? If he weren't a value-seeking I, you would not pursue him; doesn't your behavior therefore respond to his having this characteristic?"[21] The idea of presence is once again relevant. One can, I suppose, react to the presence of another human being by wanting to pursue and kill him. This already differentiates him to an extent from everything else, though as we will see, not sufficiently. Imagine that Smith is hunting another man, Jones, for sport, rather like in the movie *Surviving the Game*, and that though Jones is his prey, he is also dangerous to Smith. This is a contest of wills, cunning, ability to deceive and see through deception, strength, endurance, and the like. But surely while humans can take this contest to a new level, many animals exhibit the foregoing qualities, as well. Animals, too, are crafty and swift and ruthless in both hunting and defending themselves and their young against being killed and eaten. (In fact, many animals *must* hunt; while most humans get their food from grocery stores.)

Now it is possible to have intellectual virtues without moral virtues but not vice versa. One needs *some* amount of knowledge to be prudent and *some* amount of understanding to be just. Therefore, the difference between plants and animals is that plants have no intellect and therefore no virtues at all; their only appetite is "unconscious"; they have the nutritive or vegetative soul only. The difference between man and animals is threefold. First, men have two appetites, the senses and the will; animals only have one, the sensitive appetite. Second, men have wisdom – the third intellectual virtue which we'll talk about later, and animals do not. These two are differences in kind. Third, higher animals, too, have knowledge and understanding in a manner of speaking: e.g., a cheetah knows how to hunt and understands the needs of her cubs. But those faculties are so primitive and undeveloped as to

be essentially stubs filled to their tiny capacities entirely with “instinct.” (This is a word with mysterious meaning, since we do not know “what it is like” to be a cheetah.) Man has in addition to the moral or practical virtues (which in themselves and in their use make up the active life) also the *conscious* intellectual or speculative virtues (which make up the contemplative life). This difference is technically in degree, but the degree is so great that we may as well think of it as a difference in kind, as well.

Lions are supposed to be courageous, and foxes, prudent. But it is the intellectual virtues (i.e., knowledge, understanding, and wisdom) that give the moral virtues their ultimate form. These then generate full-fledged social cooperation and with it, ethics. Pets and livestock present special problems, but generally moral consideration and behavior are due to humans only.

Perhaps we can be less ambitious as regards the thesis of substance dualism. With respect to the intellect (though, I maintain, not the will), the materialist and spiritualist may want to meet each other halfway.

First, it is possible for an effect to have completely different properties from its cause. Thus, bakers produce delicious pastries but are not themselves delicious; a man who fattens oxen need not himself be fat; a murderer is not dead; etc. Similarly, perhaps the nonrational events in the brain *can* produce thoughts that have the property of being true or false. What do we really know about matter? Leave a primordial soup alone for a few billion years, and who knows what disgusting things will come to inhabit it. Likewise, put together an outrageous amount of different kinds of cells and organs and whatnot, zap the resulting cadaver with a lot of electricity, and maybe we would get to yell: “It’s alive!” Or so we ignorant humans tend to imagine matters.[b] Far be it from me to confuse matter with form; just because the mind is made up of atoms does not logically entail that the mind is as impotent at thinking as an atom; maybe the whole is somehow greater than the sum of its parts. A spiritualist may admit for the sake of argument, then, that materialism may be *conceivable*. It is conceivable, after all, that a certain unproven mathematical theorem is true or false despite the fact that it is necessarily definitely one or the other, e.g., it is conceivable (at least to inferior human intellects) that the theorem is true even though it is in fact impossible for it to be true. Certainly many philosophers are confident materialists who believe in neither God nor man. But a materialist must concurrently admit his complete and utter ignorance about the mechanism according to which such thought-generation allegedly happens.

Second, both parties to the discussion ought to concede that it is *actually* implausible both that the mind is pure spirit and that it is pure

matter. They should compromise by agreeing that the human intellect is a "psychosomatic unity," though with a bias toward the spirit as master over matter, being served by it, and metaphysically one level higher than it. It is true that it is a mystery exactly how the soul is united with the body such that it is able to causally interact with the physical world. But that in itself is no argument against mind-body dualism. Must all problems be easy to solve? Materialist *dissolving* the mystery is a cop-out. Perhaps this challenge is forever beyond our ken. (Perhaps it is even one of those things it is best not to know, lest this knowledge be used for evil ends.) As we go on with our learning and conversation, our understanding of both the mind and body will increase, and the dialog will become ever more sophisticated, but the solution to the "hard problem" will ultimately always elude us.

It is fashionable nowadays to compare the mind to a computer. Such statements are typically made by people whom neuroscientists imagine to be good computer programmers and whom programmers imagine to be good neuroscientists. But it is easy to show that human and artificial intelligences do not share any of their Aristotelian causes. Computer engineers deal with numerous levels of abstraction piled up on top of each other. Any piece of software is a stack. Programmers see logic, math, control flow statements, classes, software components, operating systems, algorithms, and all that. Even a distinction as primal as instructions vs. data is already logical. The lowest level of abstraction available to one qua computer scientist and the building block of every processor is a *gate*. The simplest gate is a transistor with two inputs and one output. One of two kinds of electrical current can flow through each input. If one type of current is interpreted as "true," and the other as "false," and the transistor is so constructed as to mechanically output "true" whenever both inputs are true, and "false" otherwise, then we have a gate that simulates the AND logical operation. (Again, strip away the human interpretations, and there is nothing but physical events going on in the computer.) But nothing like this is found in the brain. The brain is not made up of logic gates. Not even the most enthusiastic proponents of the "mind is a computer" theory have analogized the eye to a graphics card. The brain is *materially* completely unlike a typical PC. *Efficiently*, at the very least, the computer is a machine, while the brain is a living organ. The way the brain works, insofar as we know anything about it, does not resemble the functioning of the arithmetic logic unit in a processor. The only point of comparison is that the brain, like the computer, seems to have areas that are somewhat specialized. This part pertains to speech, this one to emotions, this function is equivocally called "memory," etc. But this means even less than it seems at first glance. Is there any material object in the world that performs a task whose parts are *not* specialized? Regarding the *final* cause, the

brain's job is not to aid thinking, let alone think on its own, but to *limit* the human power to think. Thinking is more difficult for an embodied human being than for a separated soul, but not *too* difficult. The brain is a hindrance to thought not its enabler, though a healthy brain is less of a hindrance than a sick brain. The body is the soul's prison, but it is exceedingly intricately designed. The spiritual powers that need to shine through are greenlit, and those that need to be curbed are shut off. (It's as if the soul is stupefied and "forgets" upon incarnating.) The reason for the body's enormous and astounding complexity is that both kinds of sets of faculties are extremely varied: from the ability to drive a car to appreciation of music, from playing tennis to mother love; and the most important power *denied* to humans in this life is to see the spiritual and divine light: to observe souls and God directly. (Descartes was enabled by this fact to write: "I do not fail to say that I see the men themselves, just as I say that I see the wax; and yet what do I see from the window beyond hats and cloaks that might cover artificial machines, whose motions might be determined by springs?"[22] Barnbaum (2008) suggests that autistics lack the capacity to infer that other people have souls, considering them to be mere things.) This complexity reflects the truly epic number of vulnerabilities and defenses that a human being is endowed with in this fight of his life. For example, people who have undergone near-death experiences sometimes report hearing wonderful music in the otherworldly environment they visit. Earthly music should be able to be beautiful, too, but not comparable to heavenly music; composing such music needs to be possible but cannot be effortless and must require great talent and hard work. And so forth with the nonpareil technical ingenuity and compromises and hacks in constructing the human body able to host millions of aspects and expressions of human existence in their suitable forms. The final cause of a computer, on the other hand, is for people to play games on it. Given that the 3 out of the 4 causes of the brain and computer are so thoroughly different, it is the height of rashness to pronounce casually that both are actually reducible to each other in *form*. We should at least be able to agree that "0V applied to input *A* of a transistor coupled with 5V applied to input *B* yields output 0V" and thinking "false & true = false" are different phenomena.

Now the will's desires can be "subjective and arbitrary," but the mind works according to laws of logic, evidence, probability, scientific method, etc. But a machine is also lawbound. Hence, it can *simulate* certain features of the search for truth. But not replace it. Why not? Suppose Smith styles himself a "freethinker." A materialist objects at once: the mind is the brain is matter and therefore not free at all! There is no such thing as free thought. But Smith replies that he unmistakably *can* survey possibilities. He *can* explore ideas. He *can* regard

counterfactuals. He can even write an original novel. In short, he can *imagine and contemplate possible worlds*. Unlike machines.

The intellect's key ability is to learn, to derive outputs from inputs by various methods. The inputs for machines are finite in number. Their "premises," based on which they "reason," are pre-programmed into them. The inputs for humans are infinite; we can assume anything we like.

1.2.3. Capacities of the intellect

That 1st-grade things lack the intellect means that they are "alone." I, on the other hand, am "my own thing"; I "belong to myself"; I "represent myself and act on my own behalf"; not so for a rock. Therefore, even if a form of happiness as energy can be predicated of rocks, the latter do not seek it: they do not know how. As we have seen, an ersatz intellect, i.e., the capacity to apprehend, consider, and choose between possibilities, is simulated in them by means of chance in the world, whatever its exact source.

The intellect is semi-public for two reasons: first, it can (a) both sense and reflect, and (b) both, together with the will, command an action to be performed and contemplate. Second, it can unite with other intellects, not as sublimely as the wills unite through love, but still substantially through a conversation, discussion, and study. But only God is said to know secret thoughts.

All intellectual work entails deriving an (unknown) output from some set of (known) inputs. Inputs can be gathered either a posteriori (empirically or by sensation, "upon" of "after" experience of what's going on "out there") or a priori (introspectively or by reflection, "prior to" or without experience, attending instead to the workings of one's own mind or thoughts and heart or feelings). The first thing that is characteristic of minds is knowledge. Even as creators of natural science, we start with experience and try to distill from it some kind of order and regularity in the world. Scientific discovery aims at knowledge, and knowledge, which at some point requires beliefs, is a 2nd-level phenomenon. Machines, though they can manipulate information, have no beliefs. A computer's gate or series of gates cascaded simulates logic if a human being assigns the appropriate meanings to its inputs and outputs, but the computer itself is not logical. We gain knowledge by either *analytic* or *inductive* reasoning. The second intellectual virtue, understanding, deals with rational beings and the curious things they do and is *synthetic*. Finally, wisdom traces the formal causes by unraveling the essences of things by the *deductive* method. For example, following the web of meanings where one sign points to another which points to another and so on is an exercise in deduction. In analysis, one arrives at conclusions through dividing, drilling down, as though dissecting a frog,

going from one to many or from complex to simple. In induction, one moves from particular to general, such as from a set of observations to a theory explaining them. Synthetic reasoning involves putting together, harmonizing, combining. The conclusion contains more information than the sum of the premises. One proceeds from many to one or from simple to complex, such as from virtues to a personality or from numerous considerations to a decision or from car parts to a working car or, in Sherlock Holmes' case, from a multitude of clues to the culprit. Deduction takes as its starting point the general (e.g., geometrical axioms) and ends at the particular (the theorems derived from them). No derivation can go on forever. Analysis must stop when a part, such as an elementary particle, can no longer be broken into further components. Induction ends when the sample reaches 100%. Synthesis quits when the final product is fully serviceable. And one must terminate a deductive process when the area under investigation (such as geometry) has been exhaustively developed, when the seed of the axioms has blossomed into the grand and complete theoretical edifice.

Derivation	**Cause**	**Meaning**	**Examples**
Deductive	Formal	"Wisening" how things fit together	Logic, geometry, economics, ethics
Synthetic	Final	Understanding oneself and fellow men	Psychology, entrepreneurship
Inductive	Efficient	Laws of matter and spirit; knowledge how	Natural sciences
Analytic	Material	Knowledge of contingent facts	Trivia, daily life

Table 5. Types of intellectual work.

We can arrange the four ways of reasoning in the manner proposed by Table 5. Here for the sake of illustration is an elaboration of induction. Induction as a means of obtaining empirical knowledge starts with sense data and abstracts from them regularities like natural laws. Now the senses with whose help the empirical data are gathered cannot supply any information beyond the here and now. I do not know that laws of nature do not change, and that in natural sciences the past can be a guide to the future. But I can have reasons for believing these things and understand why I believe. Belief in 1st-level causality has an a priori status: it is an aspect of the way our minds work. Of this we can satisfy ourselves through the following argument:

1. In order to live, man must act, therefore plan, therefore form connections between means and ends, therefore have

knowledge of causality.

2. In order to permit human action, the world must be sufficiently orderly.
3. If I believe that the world is chaotic, and I am right, then I will not be around to say "I told you so"; I will be dead.
4. Even if I believe that the world is chaotic (at t_1), and I am wrong, I am also likely to die (soon at some t_2) from despair through failure to act in my own interest.
5. Even if I am merely afraid (at t_0) that the world will become chaotic (at t_1), this fear is certain to produce anguish.
6. A healthy man puts away the idea of failure and death, including failure (from t_1 to t_2) and death (at t_2) caused by, for all he believes, chaotically fluctuating natural laws, and fear of both (at t_0).
7. Therefore, for the sake of (a) optimal psychological balance, (b) success and happiness, and (c) outright continuation of life, it is best to cling to the conjecture that natural laws are immutable.
8. In other words, I am happiest when I trust the world not to be or turn chaotic.
9. And this is my reason for holding that induction in sciences is a valid procedure.
   In short,
10. I do not *know* that the sun will rise tomorrow, but I *understand* why I believe it; I understand myself.

It is very convenient for us to assume that laws of nature exist on a permanent basis and inconvenient for us to doubt them. In fact, we will seriously harm ourselves if we doubt them. Induction then is a survival technique. Praxeological reflection counsels us not to worry about the universe suddenly turning into chaos. As we can see, this is not exactly Santayana's "animal faith" – animals do not have a choice instinctively not to "believe" – but a reasoned conclusion, as befits *rational* animals. Or in other words, that there are laws of nature is a deliverance of *reasonable* faith.

Consider the "grue" paradox. Call a thing grue if it is examined before t_1 = April 1st, 3005 and found green or examined after t_1 and found blue. Now there are two reasons why we might declare that (a) "All emeralds are green" (or "All ravens are black" or whatever). First, suppose that there are 1 million emeralds in the world. We randomly pick 990,000 of them, and they all turn out to be green. Simple calculations show that the probability that *all* of them are green is high, because if even one out of the 1 million was blue, say, then it would very likely have found its way into the sample, and we would have detected it. The probability of a non-green emerald drops with every

green emerald we inspect. (The sample has to be really random; it will not do to conclude that "All swans are white" by looking everywhere except Australia however thoroughly.) Second, because an emerald is a stable natural kind, and its internal structure necessarily causes it to appear green.

Induction works for (a) at all times but fails for (b) "All emeralds are grue" at t_1, because for (a) both reasons are present, yet for (b) only the first reason is valid. But why cannot a grue emerald be a natural kind? Precisely for the same reason why no natural law is likely to change on April 1st, 3005. A law of nature can be taken not only as an observed regularity but also as a permanent "deep-seated" ingrained causal disposition. The latter construal considers causal powers to be part of objects' definitions or essences, as if written directly on their hearts or coded into them. It endows all things with a measure of dignity and selfhood. Nature has joints according to which it can be usefully carved up. We see that the "old" and "new" riddles of induction are exactly the same, as are their resolutions.

There are then two kinds of induction: one based on reason as in the case of the emeralds and one based on faith as in the case of our belief in the fundamental orderliness of the cosmos and in stable essences. The need for faith is due to the fact that the sample size is finite, while the population size is infinite, stretching into all possible workings of the law into the more or less everlasting future (as well as billions of years into the past). Finding that *C* caused *E* through a few experiments cannot make "*C* causes *E*" as an essential law of nature any more probable; in fact, according to purely rational induction, we can have no confidence whatsoever in any alleged law.

"All men are mortal" if by that it is meant "All actual men who ever lived, live now, or ever will are mortal" then is too an article of reasonable faith. On the other hand, a much stronger proposition, (N) "Necessarily, all men are mortal," is either a definition of the term "man" as a class from which all immortal things are excluded in which case it is a tautology; or if it purports to be empirical, lacks any objective truth value, because we don't know how the inhabitants of other possible worlds would use their language. For suppose God had created a race of rational animals *X* who were on the contrary immortal. It would be a matter of indifference or arbitrary convention whether we'd call them "men" or something else. Humans might envy and hate them for their blessing and refuse to count *X*s as men, the better to exterminate them. Or, conversely, humans might revere them as heroes and call them demigods. (A movie can be made with either plotline.) Presume further that *X*s could interbreed with humans, such that the offspring of a male *X* and human female were immortal, but the offspring of a female *X* and human male were mortal. How would we

treat *X*s then? Plainly, (N) need be neither true nor false.

Synthesis integrates wholes, unities-in-variety. For example, the stupefying complexity of the human body and soul nevertheless yields a single personality or should for a fully healthy individual. A smorgasbord of inputs to a person produces a single decision or desire or goal to be achieved; in particular, all men chase after happiness as a single universal last end – in Boethius' words, "a state perfected by the assembling together of all good things."[23]

For our purposes it is especially important to distinguish between analysis and deduction, strange though it might seem, since these are so obviously different. In math, for example, a set of self-evident axioms, when their implications are systematically explored, results in a great variety of nontrivial and often surprising theorems of tremendous difficulty. Many philosophers believe that a statement like (S) "A bachelor is unmarried" is "analytic" because the meaning of the predicate is contained in the subject. This is a serious confusion. (S) seems like analysis only because it is a particularly simple *deduction*. It's true of F (bachelor) that p & q & r (unmarried, man, of marriageable age); therefore, Fp. But that's a deliverance of logic, that p & q & $r \rightarrow p$ is a tautology. The illusion that this is "analysis" stems from the fact that to a simpleminded person, the proposition p & q & r seems to consist of the *material parts* of p, q, and r. Here, for the sake of illustration, is a more tangled deduction example:

> A certain painting is either by Kandinsky or Picasso. If Kandinsky painted it, then it is unusual. But the painting is not unusual or inexpensive. Prove that it was Picasso who painted it.

Let's solve it. Assign variables:

K:	Kandinsky created the painting.
P:	Picasso created the painting.
U:	The painting is unusual.
I:	The painting is inexpensive.

State the premises:

(1)	K v P
(2)	$K \rightarrow U$
(3)	$\sim(U$ v $I)$

Then:

(4)	$\sim U$ & $\sim I$, from (3) by de Morgan's law
(5)	$\sim U$, from (4) by conjunction elimination
(6)	$\sim K$, from (5) and (2) by modus

		tollens
(7)		*P*, from (6) and (1) by disjunctive syllogism

The conclusion follows logically but a little nonobviously. This is clearly not analysis. But the same symbolic logic is used in both cases. There is then no "paradox of analysis," only the trouble some philosophers have with grasping the *deductive* technique. Since philosophy itself is the preeminent deductive discipline, this seems like the case of speaking in prose without knowing it. Analysis seeks the material causes of things; deduction, the formal causes. There are in the world things which have definite *essences*, such as three-dimensional space. The most general properties of these essences are self-evident, but the particular implications of them are decidedly marvelous. Spinning the complex theorems of Euclidian geometry from the axioms is much trickier and partly for that reason valuable. Mises proposes sensibly:

> All geometrical theorems are already implied in the axioms. The concept of a rectangular triangle already implies the theorem of Pythagoras. This theorem is a tautology…
>
> Nonetheless nobody would contend that geometry in general and the theorem of Pythagoras in particular do not enlarge our knowledge. Cognition from purely deductive reasoning is also creative and opens for our mind access to previously barred spheres. The significant task of aprioristic reasoning is on the one hand to bring into relief all that is implied in the categories, concepts, and premises and, on the other hand, to show what they do not imply.[24]

Geometrical theorems are true because they correspond to the axioms chosen. But the axioms of the Euclidian geometry are true because they accurately reflect the nature of physical space. They are not only *true*; we are further obliged to extend our *belief* to them in order to succeed at our undertakings. For example, geometry must be heeded in construction projects or computer-aided design or experiments in physics. If we deduce the Euclidian geometry correctly, then we are in in addition *justified* in holding it to be true. We then have justified true beliefs in its propositions and therefore *knowledge* as it is commonly defined in philosophy. Hence discovering geometry a priori in fact expands our comprehension of the world and is hardly merely "analytic." If deduction were not a legitimate style of inquiry, the question "I understand the Euclidian axioms, but is the Pythagorean theorem true?" would be "closed" as trivial or inconsequential. But it is an "open question" and a reasonable one at that.

Analysis is different from deduction. My method in metaethics will be not *analyzing* "good" but *deducing* whatever particular facts are

contained in this most general of terms. Euclidian axioms are embryonic: geometry consists in giving them full form in a grown science by tracing the multitude of their remarkable implications. I likewise aim to give full form to goodness. If we need a launchpad for the deduction, we can affirm that goodness *has something to do* with (1) human beings with a definite immutable nature (4) created by God (2) endowed with a personality and a measure of virtue (3) desiring and striving for things. We can see immediately that goodness transcends ethics and dips into psychology, economics, and theology. But there is a great deal more detail to it than appears at first glance from this axiomatic assumption. Fisher (2014) argues that analysis may be helpful if one is generally competent using a term but has not fully reflected on its meaning. But spelling out such meanings is the job of dictionary makers. Philosophical "conceptual analysis" cannot be rescued in this manner. What we need instead is the axiomatic-deductive method.

If "good" is *completely* indefinable, then it is meaningless, just like, say, "doog." It means nothing at all, for example, to say, "It is doog to keep promises." Why should "It is good to keep promises" be any different? Doesn't "good" at least have any synonyms? Can't it be rotated around in the light of reason as if a cube in the sunlight to reveal its properties? Even if in the beginning, one is unable to say, "Good is *X*," can't he make enlightening statements like "*X* is good if *Y* or *Z*, unless *W*"? Surely, we can manage at least some ostensive definitions. It seems that that's what we do in part in *normative* ethics: we grope for answers unsystematically. Perhaps good is "total utility" or whatever promotes social cooperation. Perhaps courage is some kind of good. Fortunately, I do have a complete theory of the good and will define "good" shortly. In a *Simpsons* episode, the confused and irradiated Mr. Burns appears before the multitudes and says, "I bring you love." Dr. Hibbert replies, "Is that the love between a man and a woman, or the love of a man for a fine Cuban cigar?" This is an excellent question, and, with goodness and love intimately linked, it turns out that there are four distinct types of good that exhaust all possibilities.

The fact of moral wrongness of some action does not confirm a moral theory the way an observation in a natural-scientific experiment confirms a theory in physics, insists Gilbert Harman. His example is "you round a corner and see a group of young hoodlums pour gasoline on a cat and ignite it"; you judge it to be wrong; yet the wrongness does not serve to explain anything. Well, not inductively it doesn't; we do not formulate a theory of wrongness that makes definite predictions that are observed, such that in this case our witnessing the cat burning and judging it wrong verify or lend credence to the theory. Instead, we *deduce* that burning the cat is wrong by contemplating the essence of relations between humans and potential pets, for example. A cat can be

a friend and companion, and mistreating it like that harms the abuser spiritually (a fact which to an extent unites morality and rationality). The sickness of taking pleasure in unjustified pain of another gets worse when it is indulged in and threatens humans, too. And so on; we'll elaborate on this method in Chapter 2. So eager is Harman to dismiss aprioristic reasoning that he considers even mathematics to be empirical: since "scientists typically appeal to mathematical principles," and since "mathematics often figures in the explanations of scientific observations, there is indirect observational evidence for mathematics."[25] But physics need not have been mathematical; there is surely a possible world in which math is of no use to physicists, yet math could not be impugned even there. Indeed, the truths of logic and mathematics still *refer* to something quite real: they correspond not just to the way the world *is* but more ambitiously to the way it *must necessarily be* in all possible worlds. They correspond further to how the human mind itself works.[c]

The validity of empirical evidence is due to the mind-*body* connection. Here the intellect gets its data from the bodily senses. The mind also knows *itself*, hence logic and math. But the intellect is also wired to the *will* and the lower chakras. Economics and ethics come about in the process of the mind reflecting on the will as the will goes about pursuing its happiness. It's self-knowledge generalized. The axioms are obtained by listening to the heart. The law of diminishing marginal utility is an example. Economics is the study of social manifestations of the virtues of prudence and courage. Both logic and ethics then are a priori but in different ways: logic is a priori contemplative life, ethics is a priori active life. (We can see how mathematical economics is a confusion of the two, indeed mathematical economists contribute neither to mathematics nor to economics. If there is such a thing as mathematical ethics, it is surely peripheral.) Both, contrary to what logical positivists assert, provide genuine insight into reality.

Theology in large part relies on the axiomatic-deductive method. In proving the existence of God, one might use premises like:

- The generation or corruption of anything has a cause.
- There cannot be an actual infinite of real things (as opposed to ideal things like numbers).
- We cannot multiply preceding causes of any event to infinity.
- Contingent existences require an explanation.
- Pure chaos cannot be a cause of natural law and order in the universe.
- If a cause of X is neither before X nor after X nor concurrent with X, then it must be eternal.
- A choice can only be made either randomly or intelligently,

and it's impossible randomly to select a member out of an infinite set.
- The universe has not existed forever.

These are a priori premises, and the conclusions we might draw from them are not inductive generalizations. Ethics can avail itself of a similar technique.

1.2.4. Immateriality of the will

There are other differences between the first two grades. First, every creature exists in some sense for itself. Its purpose is its own life and happiness. Happiness for a human being may consist in one thing, whereas happiness for, say, an amoeba or tiger may be something else entirely. Nonetheless, every life-form will be eager to avoid pain and death and will strive toward its ends for its own sake, whether instinctively or purposively. Even purely biologically, everything that lives is carefully separated from the external environment by anything from the membrane in a cell to skin in a human being and maintains an internal ecology and homeostasis. A machine, on the other hand, has no purpose other than to serve man by performing a useful function. Its "goals" do not differ from those of its creator. It wants nothing for itself. It is a perfect slave. A human slave might try to hide his abilities so as not to be swamped with hard work; a machine would not "think" of anything so clever. Again, a master must make sure that the slave will prefer to comply with the master's orders over rebelling; a machine does not in this manner calculate benefits and opportunity costs. A machine has no internal life or experiences that are inaccessible to anyone but itself. Where the machine ends and raw materials and the environment begin is an arbitrary decision. Machines have user input/output interfaces (keyboards, levers, controls) because they are meant to be exploited as tools for human profit; humans themselves do not feature any such things. Machines can be turned on or off at (human) will; humans cannot be. These are the most primordial differences between the two grades.

In irrational animals there is only the sensitive appetite, such that their hearts are in their stomachs; in man, there are both senses and the will or intellectual appetite which when joined with the mind is the fifth element, the quintessence of man. 1st-grade beings lack the appetite altogether – though who knows, perhaps rocks "feel" their rest energy into which their matter is convertible inside themselves. What is interesting about the human spirit is that it's a singular thing; it has unity of experience. A car is a fairly unified object, too, but it is an extension of the human *body* without a will of its own. Like "capital good," a car is a mind- and heart-dependent object. As a result, it lacks the unity of purpose that humans and higher animals have. I am "one";

like the demon-possessed man in Mk 5:2-13, a car is “legion.”

The will is an *appetite* because it *wants* something. Its acts are desire and love; it seeks satisfaction or happiness or contentment or rest; its ultimate end is peace and joy. It is *intellectual*, because it is the intellect (rather than the senses) that presents a thing to the will, the thing is judged as more or less conducive to happiness, and is thereby loved to the extent that it brings happiness. The distinction between *delight* or *pleasure* of the senses and *joy* of the will is eminently reasonable. The difference is twofold.

First, the former comes through the five senses of the *body*: touch, taste, smell, sight, and sound. The latter is felt upon the exercise of the intellect or *mind*. Second, there is a phenomenological difference in the kind and quality of experience of these two types of pleasures. The experience of eating a candy bar and relishing its sweetness is different from the experience of being honored or solving a difficult problem. For no one really rejoices from eating a candy; on the other hand, though one’s soul is elated at being honored by a community or one’s peers, the senses are silent. Another example: let Smith resolve to follow a diet. Yet on one occasion he overeats. Here Smith’s delight produced by the sense of taste coexists with intellectual sorrow of realizing that he has sabotaged his own project. Smith is upset even though he genuinely enjoyed the food. The fact that sometimes what brings pleasure to the senses also causes anguish to the will (and vice versa) is a major hallmark of the human condition. Calculation of profits and losses can take place despite the fact that there are in man two appetites. For sensual pleasures are fed into the will which then, synthetically, tallies up the pleasures and pains, whatever their source.

Moreover, desires of the will – unlike those of the senses – are unlimited, such that perhaps only the infinite God could fully sate them, and require for their satisfaction highly elaborate strategies which, though drafted by prudence, make full use of all the capacities of the speculative intellect described in Section 1.2.3. Aristotle distinguished between lives of power, intellect, and senses (“the ‘political,’ the philosophic, and the voluptuary’s”[26]). He means that the will can experience joy via active life, contemplative life, and sensual pleasures. For example, at times the pleasures of the senses can overflow into the will, sparking joy. A man who was sick and bedridden for a long time, upon hitting a critical stage in his recovery, ventures outside and exults from the feeling of power over his body. One may find joy in bending the world to his will. Another font of fulfillment is intellectual contemplation, such as of truth or beauty (as well as discovery of truth and creation of beauty). Loving communion between friends through charity, whether brotherly or conjugal, can also soothe.

In terms of possible (1) power over nature, (2) intellectual

achievement, and (3) joy, for man the sky is the limit, something which is not true regarding sensuality. Many economists recognized that the sensual desires are under the control of the will: man decides rationally which such caprices he will pamper and which he will restrain. They also felt that there is in most people something akin to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, however apparently arbitrary Maslow's own hierarchy is. E.g.:

> The conditions that surround extreme poverty… tend to deaden the higher faculties. Those who have been called the Residuum of our large towns have little opportunity for friendship; they know nothing of the decencies and the quiet, and very little even of the unity of family life; and religion often fails to reach them.[27]
>
> Modern wealth expresses itself above all in the cult of the body: hygiene, cleanliness, sport.[28]
>
> The foremost social means of making man more human is to fight poverty. Wisdom and science and the arts thrive better in a world of affluence than among needy peoples.[29]
>
> A man can be neither a saint, nor a lover, nor a poet, unless he has comparatively recently had something to eat.[30]

The virtue of temperance, in particular, is a kind of liaison, a middleman arbitrating between the delights of the senses and the joys of the will. It moderates animalistic carnal pleasures so as not to let them encroach on conscious purposive plans of the will. Of the vices opposed to temperance, two are of note, both occurring when it is not the senses that are controlled by the will but the reverse: the will is a slave to the senses. The will can be such a slave involuntarily or voluntarily. In the first case, a man constantly succumbs to passions which ultimately harm him either in happiness or holiness, yet always regrets thus giving in. This vice is called "incontinence." The man, when tempted with pleasures or avoidance of pain, "cannot help himself." Though he understands that he is so impulsive and easily dominated by lust or rage and resolves to moderate his passions again and again, he often fails. He knows overeating is bad for health but cannot resist delicious snacks. Etc. In the second case, the man has consciously and deliberately chosen to cater only to his base urges. He decided to order his life in such a way that he does not care for work or achievement or other people or wisdom but has lowered himself to the rank of animals, purposively seeking nothing but sensual gratifications: food, alcohol, drugs, sex, games, the arousals of anger and vengeance, and so on. This vice is called "intemperance" and is more serious than incontinence because the will has consented to be degraded like this. A third vice has the name of "insensitivity," wherein the senses are so weak that for the will

it is not worth governing them. An insensitive man does not even attend to the necessities of life like food and sleep and so forth; he is like an inanimate object, passionless, not caring for pleasures. He is not interested in sex. He never gets angry, even when anger is perfectly justified, such as when he has been cheated. This is also inhuman and bad, though it can be due to a bodily ailment.

Free-will, in contrast with the will, is the power of choice. If one desires *X*, then that which desires is the will; but that which chooses (the pursuit of) *X*, while setting aside *Y* and *Z*, is the *free* will. But both will and free will are the same faculty. Free-will adds two differences to the will: first, the fact that not all desires can be satisfied, and therefore desires have to be ranked according to urgency or subjective importance; second, the fact that no single state of the trinity within – i.e., ends chosen, knowledge of how to attain those ends, and the powers to make one's dreams come true – is essential to man. As we have already stated, any material entity, if it stopped obeying its own natural laws, would cease to be what it was. It would instantly corrupt for having "violated the law." It is true that the will seeks happiness by necessity, but a man is able to pursue happiness in a wide variety of ways: no particular manner of this pursuit is essential to him. A man can switch from pursuing *X* to pursuing *Y* and remain a man, what he is. It may be objected that a rock, too, can travel in this direction or that one, at this speed or that, and remain a rock. Now the intellect regards choices. Suppose (contrary to fact) that a planet could say to itself: "The sun disrespects me. I keep rotating with nothing fun happening. Should I move to a different solar system?" Even if the planet could consider these possibilities, it would have no permission from nature to escape its destiny and choose to move. It would always ("voluntarily") choose the same way, namely, to stay with the old sun. (Planets are decent people this way.) But a man can say: "The boss disrespects me. I keep evenly rotating: get up in the morning, go to work, come home, sleep, get up… It's just no fun. I'm going into business for myself." And actually do it. The first difference then regards the *fact* of the will's weighing the options delivered to it by the intellect. The second difference emphasizes that no particular *outcome* of the weighing is required in order to preserve the essence of the chooser. In other words, the intellect mulls over multiple reasons pro and con for various courses of actions one discerns before himself, and the will responds by judging which of these reasons are more or less compelling, synthesizing the multitude of influences into a single resolution. This capacity of the will is what makes it "free." It may be true as Harris (2012) submits that we don't really know where our thoughts, ideas, feelings "come from." But that fact does not impugn our deep-rooted teleological nature. And that is all that the concept of freedom of the will requires in order to be tractable.

Wherever (incompatible) desires come from, *once they arrive*, we choose between them.

Since nonhuman animals do not have a will, they do not have a free will, either. But they feel sensual pleasure and have rudimentary intellects. Hence animals have "free sensuality." A cat may need to decide between caviar and a Strasburg pie placed next to each other, and inasmuch as it picks one and sets aside the other, the cat's sensitive appetite is free.

That the will is wholly immaterial can be shown as follows:

1. Insofar as the will is free, it weighs its options.
2. Though each choice has a sufficient cause, the weighing cannot be dispensed with, as it is precisely the process by which the decision is determined.
3. But a thing is material if and only if it is subject to necessity in its operation, if it cannot choose its course of action. A rock does not contemplate whether falling on the ground will be more or less pleasant for it than floating in midair.
4. Random "choices" on the 1st level are admitted but do not change the gist of the argument, since humans do not choose randomly.
5. Therefore, since no will is ever unfree, the will is immaterial.

As negative theology spells out what God is *not*, so "negative anthropology" would be a science of what *man* is not. Thus, let us ask: Is man a body? Is the soul material? Note again the subtlety that I am inviting a materialist to agree with me that the words "body" and "soul" *mean* different things; but the materialist is welcome to disagree with me on whether they *refer* to different things, as well. To answer this question, we need to grasp what matter is, and one of its properties is being necessitated to behave in a precise way in any given interaction under threat of instant corruption upon disobedience. But a human being does as he pleases. For example, I trust it will be agreed that the Constitution of the United States allows everybody the free choice between cheesecake and strudel. As a result, one will go neither to hell nor to prison if he opts for either. Since body and soul have different properties, they cannot be identical with each other (as per indiscernibility of identicals, the less controversial part of Leibniz's law), and therefore, whatever the soul *is*, it *is not* material, *is not* a body.

Further, in merely material objects, there is no distinction between the "is" and the "ought." A rock is everything it has ever been and ever will be, unlike men, whose nature, character, and well-being not only change but are subject to judgment as good or bad. It may be that a rock *is* here and *is moving* there; that it *is* spinning but *will soon stop* doing so. However, changes in a 1st-grade object or its environment

make no difference to that object: its future state is in no sense "better" than the present state. Matter and energy are conserved, but neither do they increase. Human happiness can and does.

What, after all, is so un- or nonnatural about humans as they appear to the common man? Every man knows perfectly and intimately that he thinks thoughts in his mind and feels feelings in his heart (i.e., the will); he is scheming and striving; he hopes and dreams, burns with passion, rejoices and grieves; he acts for ends; he is glad to be alive. He also knows quite confidently that doorknobs and even computers are nothing like him. Bodies *move*; but souls *aspire*; and there is no reducing the latter to the former. Is the fear of a "profligate ontology" really sufficient to demand reduction of the spiritual to the physical? Is it really so necessary cynically to debunk man? Occam's razor counsels against multiplying entities *unnecessarily*, but here's a paradigmatic case where this *is* necessary.

The 2nd grade is the grade of *self-interest*, sometimes enlightened, other times less so. I do not believe that progress of natural sciences will ever render ethics or economics superfluous. But even if one is so obstinate that he denies the separation between the grades or *metaphysical* dualism (or "triplism" in our case), one cannot deny at least that in the present condition of our knowledge, he must adopt in social sciences including economics, ethics, and metaethics *methodological* dualism. One must study man, while assuming that he is *fully* physical, as if he were not *merely* physical, as if he were above the nature of the material world.[31] Mises used to give an example of the motion of people and subway trains each morning at Grand Central Terminal in New York. To someone unenlightened by knowledge of human nature, the happenings there would be utterly mysterious. What explains the hustle and bustle of these strange beings? One would investigate all the possible material and biological causes of these events. Could each person be an automaton, programmed to move in such an unpredictable manner? Is their motion random, as if they were gas molecules? Are humans moving hither and thither because they are like bees? Fortunately, we know better: his project is futile. If only our scientist understood that there was a *reason* for each person to descend into the subway, namely, to get to where they want, such as to work, and that the aim of that would be to exchange labor for money, and so forth, then he would solve the problem. Admitting the 2nd grade of being and with it, purposive action, teleology, and final causation, is at the very least scientifically fruitful.

1.2.5. Man's power over nature

So much for this very cursory outline of the human intellect and will. What of power? Indeed, man is an acting agent. He does not

merely react to external stimuli; he takes initiative and acts with the purpose of changing both himself and the world according to his design. Similarly, no life-form, not even the most primitive one, is entirely at the mercy of its environment. It, too, acts on instinct, as if propelled by a potent force to use natural resources to sustain its life and pursue its ends, whatever they may consist in.

At our present level of technology, no machine can in a highly complex environment do things like (a) find food and convert it into not merely energy or motion but into physical parts of itself (a car uses gasoline to run, but it does not use gasoline to repair its own engine), (b) grow and increase in power, (c) reproduce and care for the young, (d) regenerate itself, (e) help its fellows in need; no machine's complexity even approaches that of a single-celled organism; no machine as of now is a self-contained miniature productive factory that can perform the vast variety of functions (and even has the ability to develop new functions, given that human labor is by far the most nonspecific factor of production) that human beings can perform. At the very least, men would have to be called machine-building machines, but that in itself is to single them out as unique because machines do not build other machines unless instructed to, and how, and plugged into an electrical outlet by men. The sheer enormity of human *outward manifestations of life* is enough to bury any attempt to think of humans merely as machines. When in the movie *Gladiator*, Juba says, upon beholding the Colosseum for the first time, "I didn't know men could build such things," he is giving glory to human beings, not machines. Until a robot can pass every Turing test imaginable, life will be fundamentally different from nonlife. Furthermore, such supreme human versatility is made possible by the incredible design of the human body. While man-made machines can be very sophisticated, perhaps only what I in Section 1.2.2 called "machine-like spirits" can exhibit the stunning mechanical complexity that they have. Intelligent design in biology theorists like William Dembski and Michael Behe have not pointed out the striking specified / irreducible complexity of even the simplest biological structures in vain. Again, perhaps the phrase "only God can make a tree" in Joyce Kilmer's poem means that life has never been observed to come from nonlife. (This, even if true, need not support theism, because it can be countered, somewhat desperately, that living things may always have existed and therefore were never "made.") Its second meaning could be that even the design of *matter* in a tree must come from on high.

Calling our capacities and skills "side effects" of the evolutionary process becomes more implausible the more powers human beings acquire over the world. Behaviorism, Mises notes, "seeks to investigate reflexes and instincts, automatisms and unconscious reactions. But it has

told us nothing about the reflexes that have built cathedrals, railroads, and fortresses, the instincts that have produced philosophies, poems, and legal systems, the automatisms that have resulted in the growth and decline of empires, the unconscious reactions that are splitting atoms."[32] Neither has genetic determinism.

1.2.6. Man's personality

The intellect is one of the two things that separates men from machines; personality is the other. A personality is neither nature nor act but accident of the soul but of a unique sort. Now many *universals* have accidents, regardless of the grade of the things they describe. Thus, "wall" is a universal: this is a wall, and that, and here is another one. A wall in general, as a term that applies to many things, can turn from red to blue, from tall to short, from wooden to brick to metal, and remain a wall. Almost every conceivable "nominal" universal has accidental properties because the things that it refers to can vary in their characteristics and remain describable by the universal. This penny is shiny, and that one is dull, yet both are pennies. My desk and couch are both essentially pieces of furniture but only accidentally brown. However, suppose that the couch and chair form a matching set that I have personally chosen. This time, they are essentially brown (or at least essentially "of the same color"), and their brownness is a kind. If they were not brown, I would not have bought them. A genus (universal, essence) coupled with a difference (a given accident) narrows the definition down to a species. There are some exceptions to this general rule. Consider a penny again. Call UniquePenny any object that is qualitatively identical to (i.e., not distinct from) it but quantitatively separate from it. If we do not treat spatial location as an accident, then "UniquePenny" will not have accidents. "Electron" may lack accidents for another reason: all electrons are simple indistinguishable elementary particles.

Particulars, i.e., real rather than ideal things, are divided into *material* and *spiritual*. The physical universe has an essence from its material and efficient causes. As we saw in Section 1.1, this consists of matter located in various points in space and moving through it and energy radiating and changing form, according to definite laws of nature. This essence is full information about all the physical goings-on. This leaves no room for accidents and entails that as regards the physical world, *any* change in it causes the *entire* universe sort of to "refresh" metaphysically, to undergo substantial change.

Now clearly this is troublesome. This kind of essence does not distinguish *objects* from each other. We then note that a table, say, is a mind-dependent construction of an individual rational creature. It is part of his own personal world which he rules and carves up as he sees

fit. Thomas Reid argues thus:

> All bodies, as they consist of innumerable parts that may be disjoined from them by a great variety of causes, are subject to continual changes of their substance, increasing, diminishing, changing insensibly. When such alterations are gradual, because language could not afford a different name for every different state of such a changeable being, it retains the same name, and is considered the same thing.[33]

Each person chooses for himself at his own pleasure which properties to count as essential or accidental. Though there are interpersonal conventions, there is no right answer here. "The question is which is to be master – that's all," as Humpty Dumpty put it. Thus, merely material particulars do not have accidents in themselves but may acquire them for "convenience of speech." In availing himself of such a convenience, however, each person remains in control of his own definitions. Car, oil, human, brownness, be they artificial or natural kinds, are prototypical universals, applying to a variety of things quite independent of anyone's wishes and hopes. But how to regard a particular table's identity through time is very much one's own decision which may legitimately differ from other people's.

Spiritual particulars, specifically humans, are different. Humanity describes *what* we are; personality, who we are. And there is such a thing as a man's core identity deep in his own soul that unifies his psyche. What belongs to one's spiritual essence on the one hand and to his accidental personality traits on the other is objective. A materialist would have to deny this distinction. He would hold that Smith calls a certain person the same name "Jones" today, tomorrow, and the next day, just as with all material particulars, simply for the convenience of speech. However, Jones may demur to being constructed in this manner. He feels that his identity remains the same despite changes both to his body and to his personality. Let me suggest that Jones is entitled to his skepticism over Smith's alleged powers over him.

Universals, material particulars, and spiritual particulars then end up having essences and accidents, but all for completely different reasons.

1.2.7. The three ends

Table 6 links the human trinities with temperaments. A temperament, as described by Carl Jung, Myers & Briggs, and especially David Keirsey, is a sort of spiritual specialization of each human being along one of the four cardinal virtues: temperance (Guardian) and justice (Idealist) in the personality trinity, prudence (Rational) and courage (Artisan) in the narrow happiness trinity. Or we might match

the temperaments to the four dimensions of human experience: moral, spiritual, intellectual, and aesthetic. There is much more to it of course than these basic correspondences; Keirsey (1998) sets out each temperament and its subtypes in excruciating detail. One's temperament is inborn and does not change during one's lifetime. I believe that not everyone has a Keirseyan temperament. Some folks are so low in their level of development, still learning what they are and not to hate other people, that their souls are not yet defined this way. The two pre-temperaments in the nature trinity are the destructive Monsters and the conniving Barely Humans. The four cardinal virtues are thus "quadriform"; they are four separate and distinct yet complementary things that together form a unity, as though four matching shards of a complete diamond. Nevertheless, the temperaments are unequal in dignity in my view, with Guardian being the lowest temperament and Artisan the highest. The relations are that Rationals "rule" Guardians, and Idealists rule Artisans, but for the passive yin, the rulers are superior to the ruled, while for the active yang, it's the reverse: the ruled are superior to the rulers.

Nature	**Power**	**Intellect**	**Will**
Part	duty	law	good will
Pre-temperament	*(higher) humanity*	Barely Human	Monster
Gender	fruit	yang	yin
Personality			
Part	self-control	spiritual wholeness	inner harmony
Temperament	Guardian	*(approved of) identity*	Idealist
Gender	yin	fruit	yang
Narrow Happiness			
Part	execution	plan	pleasure
Temperament	Artisan	Rational	*(true) happiness*
Gender	yang	yin	fruit

Table 6. Temperaments and human becoming.

"Narrow" happiness means satisfaction of 1st-order desires, whatever they happen to be. Narrow happiness is the human last end; it is both an end and an act, viz., an act of self-forgetful *playing* without care. Before one can pursue this last end, however, there are two other ends to be attained first.

The first end is uncorrupted nature: one needs to connect himself

as a “branch” to the “vine” of divinity and other branches of humanity. As archetypes, though not as actual humans, Barely Human and Monster are neutral. BH yang represents the attitude of ruthless unconstrained rapacious selfishness, win at all costs mentality unconcerned with morality or creativity. It’s the fiery flaring up of the lifeforce and ego within. Monster yin is the cold, brute hatred of and aggressive rising up against any opposition to oneself. It’s domination and humiliation of the enemy. There is a place for both in life. Still, the brotherhood of men is disrupted most severely with crimes against person and property. Aristotle argues that “he who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must either be a beast of a god.”[34] And Monsters are no gods. Almost the same conclusion prevails for Barely Humans: they must come to realize that people are more than odd-behaving machines to be used at will. Barely Humans are the prototypical *Homo economici*, archselfish, responding only to promises of reward and threats of punishment to them personally. They will usually eschew violence but will easily lie, betray, and cheat if it suits them. Monsters then sin by violence; Barely Humans, by deception. Unjust violence and fraud are *crimes*. St. Thomas calls them “beginners.”

The fruit of advancement through nature is being accepted into society as a productive member thereof and the ability (a gift to *power*), now that the person is no longer threatened with prison time, to care for oneself.

The second end is the flowering of personality. Personality can be taken in the narrow sense as *structure* or in the wide sense as *content*. As structure, it includes only Guardian temperance and Idealist justice which ensure the oneness and integrity of the soul. As content, it covers everything that makes one’s soul lovable, specifically a character and a self. Character is a harmonious union of a number of well-defined and known virtues: courage, prudence, humility, magnanimity, modesty, religion, etc. Self is a collection and solidification of permanent pleasures, interests, loves, projects, and life’s works. Character is built; self is discovered; and personality is a combination of both. Personality grounds the pursuit of happiness because the sorts of things one enjoys depend on who he is. These pleasures will not be undone in the future. The key advantage of self-discovery is that without it, commitments to long-term missions are problematic, because of the spiritual chaos in one’s heart. It makes no sense for me to embark upon ambitious endeavors if today I like *X*, and tomorrow I dislike *X*. I begin a task only to abandon it a little later. I’m a “quitter.” So, my pleasures are of a primitive kind capable of being immediately gratified: food, sex, games, and the like. Character is a form of spiritual strength and is also indispensable for any lasting success. The Guardians’ occasional sin is accusation; the Idealists’, temptation. These are merely *vices*, and, as the

saying goes, vices are not crimes. These temperaments are “proficient.”

That the self is discovered means that there is such a thing as “true” or “authentic” self. But there is the correspondence theory of truth and the coherence theory. To apply the latter, the self is true if it is *merely* coherent, unified, and complex, but there may be more than one such self. Regardless, some desires are low and ignoble, some are mutually contradictory, some are impossible to achieve, and the self, to be seen for what it is, must be cleansed.

The fruit of advancement through virtue is comprehensive self-knowledge. One accepts himself for who he is and becomes free, being satisfied with his personality and therefore with the pleasures unique to him, to seek narrow happiness. It is a gift to the *intellect* because one already owns and loves himself; but man is wolf to himself until he finds out who he really is.

Narrow happiness is the third and last end. It encompasses pleasure most generally as including the delights of health (lifeforce), senses, and power; joy more narrowly conceived as the pleasure of the intellectual appetite resulting from conscious purposive satisfactions of desires; and even more specifically overall triumph and elation and pride in a life well lived and things accomplished with all particular ends subordinated to or integrated into a life’s work or some overarching purpose or meaning of one’s life. (The ultimate of integration is to have a *last end*, such as the Thomistic vision of God to which all other ends are means. But it need not be that extreme. One can have a purpose in life without a *perfect* hierarchy of ends.) The difference between these is how greatly and comprehensively narrow happiness will be enjoyed. Narrow happiness also requires a life that is progressing with hope for the future including even one’s reward in the life to come. “Success” and “fun” mentioned in the Introduction belong to Rationals and Artisans respectively. The combination of all three ends successfully attained may be called *true* happiness. Rationals and Artisans as a rule do not sin, enjoying natural righteousness and a completed personality with good traits, and are “perfect,” though of course they do not always succeed in their quest for narrow happiness (the ultimate gift to the *will*).

The last three temperaments are masters over the first three. Thus, Idealists guide Guardians away from perpetuating a mere routine in their daily lives to, through its help, forging a permanent and stable personality. Rationals, further, as lawgivers (and law discoverers) command Barely Humans by shaping their behavior through incentives. The difference between them is that Barely Humans on the inside are a swirling mishmash of unrelated ends and cravings, whereas a Rational’s (and especially Artisan’s) soul is a piece of work: a multifaceted yet unified and integrated identity, reflecting perhaps some coherent aspect

of the divine. In their turn, Artisans are virtuosos of self-defense, keeping the Monsters in check. Monsters get off on terrorizing those weaker than they; at the same time they do not respond to incentives like Barely Humans; they are fearless, with the caveat that this fearlessness comes not through courage but through despair. They can be likened both to a tornado and a cornered rat. Overcoming that despair and earning a kind of right to exist is part of the Monsters' mission in life.

Punishments for crimes and sins are usually symmetrically retaliatory. For example, for Monsters, Artisan self-defense is complemented with judicial *condemnation*, as though a cancerous cell is cut off from the social body and burned. "Do you, Monster, hate others?" an Artisan declares. "Society hates you back. No mercy shall be given." The Rational's making general laws and setting and promulgating punishments for breaking them find their match in particular *deterrence* through a criminal trial. Rationals say: "Are you, Barely Human, indifferent to your fellow man, caring only about yourself? Have you used people unjustly for your own ends? Society shall be just as indifferent to you and sacrifice you to make other potential con artists afraid." Idealists punish Guardians by *retribution*; and are themselves punished to be *rehabilitated*. Comparable evil is returned for evil. Rationals and Artisans do not get explicitly punished, but they can be incompetent, in which case reality itself will hurt them in the form of broken plans and failed executions. We will have occasion to revisit the issue of punishment in Chapter 2.

In finding nature, one reconciles himself with fellow men; personality, with himself; and narrow happiness, with the world. For example, Kant proposed as practically self-evident that the aim of this life is to become holy or "worthy of happiness." But actual happiness does not necessarily ensue upon holiness (another obvious fact), yet there is no point to becoming *worthy* of happiness without eventually one day *enjoying* happiness. Hence, Kant's argument for the existence of a just God and for immortality of the soul such that holiness is crowned with (narrow) happiness in the next life. A holy man hones his nature with works of mercy for other people and his virtues with a measure of disciplined self-denial. Only such a person is qualified to be cheered by physical goods – in that lies the kernel of the entire field of ethics and moral psychology and theology. At the same time, a metaphysically and morally good man need not avoid worldly delights; he need not be an ascetic and in fact is advised not to be one. Narrow happiness without holiness is vain and unsatisfying, "a chasing after the wind"; holiness without narrow happiness, i.e., miserable asceticism, is either a grave injustice or pointless and even revolting fanaticism.

G.E. Moore contends that "to be conscious of a beautiful object is

a thing of great intrinsic value."[35] This opinion is plausible if by intrinsic he means noninstrumental, that is, having the character of ultimate end rather than means, since by definition beauty is that which when seen pleases. But if by it he means objective, then I disagree. A beautiful object has no objective or metaphysical value; it can only be a physical good. For example, consciousness of beauty must be *enjoyed* in order to be valuable. I do affirm, however, that narrow happiness as the ultimate physical good is a combination of vision, comprehension, and fruition. As St. Thomas describes the happiness of the blessed in heaven, "even among ourselves not everything seen is held or possessed, forasmuch as things either appear sometimes afar off, or they are not in our power of attainment. Neither, again, do we always enjoy what we possess; either because we find no pleasure in them, or because such things are not the ultimate end of our desire, so as to satisfy and quell it. But," he continues with his theology, "the blessed possess these three things in God; because they see Him, and in seeing Him, possess Him as present, having the power to see Him always; and possessing Him, they enjoy Him as the ultimate fulfillment of desire."[36] He even estimates vision to be superior to pleasure, an opinion I find rather pedantic since these are equal parts of the yin-yang-fruit trinity. Certainly the idea that pleasure alone is true happiness, divorced on the one hand from the knowledge and secure possession of it, and on the other from metaphysical and moral goods which are its foundation, leads to perverse consequences – e.g., Moore quotes Plato's *Philebus*, saying that an oyster, too, might have pleasure of this sort. Similarly, grasp of beauty, firm ownership of it, and delight in it inseparably constitute a form of physical goodness.

1.3. Grade #3: God

The 3rd grade is *first cause*, understood as communication of being, creativity, and is realized only in God. There are (1) physical causality (chance and necessity); (2) human teleology (voluntary actions which have reasons for them); and (3) God's goodness which is the 3rd-grade mode of causation unique to God which will be discussed presently, as indicated in Table 7.

Causality Mode	**1st Level** physical necessity	**2nd Level** teleological self-interest	**3rd Level** grounding self-diffusion of goodness

Table 7. Causality of the levels.

Now the nature of physical necessity consists of three conditions. *First*, the effect does not occur before the cause. *Second*, *A* causes *B* by necessity in the case when if *A* failed to cause *B*, then it would instantly

corrupt; its nature would be destroyed; it would be annihilated as an instance of its nature. It cannot afford not to cause *B* if it cares to save its own skin. In short, *B must* follow *A*, lest there be fire-and-brimstone eternal damnation of the essence of the cause: the cause would commit a "sin," and God does not forgive even a single sin to physical things: "You broke the law," He says, "now you 'die.'" At this point, we might see a problem, e.g., day always follows night, in fact, it must follow night, as per the natures of the sun, earth, space, etc., but surely, night does not cause day. So, we need to tack on a *third* condition which is that there is a transfer of energy between cause and effect, a kind of low-level love. The cause "gives of itself" to produce fruit, the effect. God did not cause the world in this manner. Either the history of the universe stretches back into the past infinitely, or time itself (split into its four phases) came into existence with it; either way, God cannot be said to have been "before" the universe. If God had not created, then He would still be good, as per His essence. Nor apparently was there any energy imparted into the universe by God during its earliest stage of the Planck epoch. In short, the first cause was under no necessity to create: nothing poked or prodded God to make the world.

Similarly, there was nothing missing in God's life that He needed the creation for His own petty ends. He was not lonely or bored or unfulfilled. The statement "God was burdened or unsettled by the nonexistence of the universe" is false. Indeed, suppose that God was not completely happy and created because, for example, He wanted company. Then it would no longer be true that God "wills nothing except by reason of [His] goodness."[37] He would have created because of the utility to Him of the creation which would be good as a means to the furtherance of God's "selfish" interests. In other words, there would be an evil in God which the creation would help remedy, and therefore the creation would spring from something evil rather than from something good. On the contrary, God is perfect on the 2nd level, and the eternal and immutable God cannot and does not act, for one cannot improve upon perfection:

> An acting being is discontented and therefore not almighty. If he were contented, he would not act, and if he were almighty, he would have long since radically removed his discontent. For an all-powerful being there is no pressure to choose between various states of uneasiness; he is not under the necessity of acquiescing in the lesser evil.
>
> Omnipotence would mean the power to achieve everything and to enjoy full satisfaction without being restrained by any limitations. But this is incompatible with the very concept of action.[38]

This 2nd-level (that is, the level of social sciences that study rational beings) God comprehends Himself and knows all possibilities of finite existence. But He does not of and by Himself on this level know *actual* things outside Himself. He has no knowledge whatsoever which possible world is the actual one or what time it is now. There is no reason why He would. God in His self-interested aspect can neither create nor interact with the world that He created. What would motivate a perfectly happy God to go to work? The pre-creation God's will was free vacuously in the sense that God enjoyed total bliss in His self-contemplation and faced no choices between competing ends. We must therefore distinguish between the *natural* merry 2nd-level self-interest of God in whose image we are made, and the 3rd-level *supernatural* goodness of God which is the maker of the 1st- and 2nd-grade images. On the 2nd level we do not need to demarcate the persons of the Trinity. Their wills are in perfect harmony, their intellects are thoroughly self-aware, and their powers to "enjoy full satisfaction" are equally mighty.

Here we are then; and of us God is the first cause; so there must be some other form of causation, for which "goodness" is the best moniker. The self-diffusion of this goodness is neither necessitated nor random nor voluntary. It was *fitting* for God to create, but we cannot assert more than that. God created not out of His "overflowing 2nd-level *love* for His creatures," because logically prior to creation, the creatures did not exist and could not therefore be loved. Rather, He created out of His overflowing 3rd-level *goodness*.

God's 3rd level is sufficiently realized in the begetting of the Son; creation of the universe is cherry on top. The meaning of "to overflow" is "to exceed even the Son." If God on the 3rd level could not be God, could not become conscious of Himself, could not be *good* without the world which would be the only thing that would realize His goodness, then an unfitting dependence fraught with bad theology would be introduced. The idea of the Trinity thus guards us against, for example, Hegel's errors.

Goodness can be of an *effect* or state of affairs or of a *cause* of this state of affairs. God on the 1st and 2nd levels is good, call this goodness G, but the combination of God plus the created world is very good, call it VG. The question is, how did the superior or very good state arise from the inferior or merely good state, given especially that God did not have to create, meaning that His nature would remain intact if He had failed to create; nor did He want to create, meaning that God would not in any way be distressed if He had failed to create. It seems that G can be reduced to VG, if in addition to G's being and essence, God possessed the ability to improve them into VG. But any capacity to improve something, especially the global state of affairs, is itself a wonderfully good thing, call this goodness DG for divine goodness. Why reserve this

term for self-diffusion of 3rd-level goodness and not designate the other two modes of causation good? There are two reasons. First, nature and men do not have to do good. Their actions need not have good consequences and often, in fact, do not, whereas God's providence is presumably far superior in its prowess to do good. Second, and more important, because physical causality and teleology, in making the world a better place, are motivated by the cause's own needs: to persevere in one's nature or to become happier. But God has no self-promoting agenda and acts solely so that good things may exist.

To be able to placate any desire one may have now or will have in the future is to have *great power*, but it's far from *omnipotence*. God's ad intra omnipotence is understood as the power to achieve perfect happiness, eternally, self-sufficiently, and once and for all, and belongs to His 2nd level; God's ad extra omnipotence is the 3rd-level power to create an external to Him world ex nihilo. An *almost* perfectly happy god whose only unsatisfied desire is to watch TV could perhaps create the TV. But in so doing he'd be dependent on an external object; his power would be greater still if he could *change himself* so that he would be happy on his own. Then an outside means to perfection would be within him, by which fact he'd be metaphysically loftier and hence physically happier. God's 3rd-level power in a way ensures His happiness: if God, per impossibile, were flawed on the 2nd level, God's 3rd-level goodness would instantly fix Him. Thus, an ad extra evil god who creates for example because he wants to watch us suffer cannot be fully happy and therefore is not ad intra omnipotent.

Just as men are superior in nature to rocks, so God is superior to men; and as teleology is unique to rational beings, so divine goodness is unique to God. God on the 2nd level is *perfect*, and human beings as a whole, defined by their 2nd level, are *pretty decent*, resembling God to a certain degree. But God on the 3rd level or God as a whole is divinely good, whereas human beings are *not divinely good at all*, bearing no resemblance to God whatsoever.

This is as solid a reason as any for holding that God is transcendent and totally other. For His essential mode of causation is rather unlike those with which we are most familiar in this world. Mises was wrong in writing that "there are for man only two principles available for a mental grasp of reality, namely, those of teleology and causality. … Change can be conceived as the outcome either of the operation of mechanistic causality or of purposeful behavior; for the human mind there is no third way available."[39] He only had two thirds of the picture. Just as if we do not admit self-interest, then we miss understanding people, so by not countenancing goodness we miss judging God. In other words, atheists (like Mises) who fail to recognize the 3rd level are bad enough; materialists who fail to recognize the 2nd

are much worse. Even something like political egalitarianism, to the refutation of which I devote my two books on John Rawls and Gerald Cohen, pales in comparison with these fundamental, massive, ghastly errors. No other doctrine defiles the universe to a greater extent.

Goodness is like boundless fire, except that fire consumes and destroys, irrationally, whereas God creates and orders all things sweetly. God's creativity is an unstoppable force, making a never-ending world of inexhaustible richness. It creates beauty as per its inner nature though by no means compulsively. It flows and coils through the void of nonbeing, leaving behind wondrous things. It attends to the entire creation, making all things new when needed. Just as a man's 2nd-level soul controls and commands the 1st-level body in acting, so God's 3rd-level firestorm of creativity uses God's own 2nd-level spirit as a prototype and drives it to act as a cause. As the human (1st-level) body moves, so God's (2nd-level) spirit loves; that is, as the body moves without any external forces moving it, so the divine spirit loves by infusing being without any dissatisfaction felt by the lover – without any external object the nonpossession of which causes God displeasure.

God deserves the appellation "supernatural" because in Him the perfection of each level is realized. The perfection of the 1st level lies in God's material *simplicity* or lack of composition and in efficient *freedom*. Freedom means absence of constraints imposed on one by external laws. Thus, God is not a conjunction of some piece *A* and piece *B* united and interacting according to natural laws that are prior to God and which God obeys. God is regulated by or owes his existence to no antecedent conditions. Any non-divine object, such as a billiard ball or a human being, is unfree for two reasons. First, because it is constrained by things other than itself, and certainly the pre-creation God had no external objects to condition Him; second, because in any case, it is still constrained, if only by its nature. Note an ambiguity: I am saying that a thing is not free because it has an identity: it is something that cannot become everything else. But it seems that prime matter (or prime energy) has precisely this sort of freedom, as the building blocks of all things. (By prime matter I mean non-lawbound matter which is essentially grade #0.) Am I following "David of Dinant, who most absurdly taught that God was prime matter"?[40] In a manner of speaking; paradoxes usually vanish when they are rightly understood.

On the 1st level, we discuss what God is *not*, and it seems that God is like nothing created. But prime matter, too, is just barely above nothing: it is pure potentiality. Now prime matter consists (ideally, because it is an abstraction) of a vast number of completely inert point particles. *Each* particle has no internal structure and, therefore, is vacuously (a) pure act. It *is*, indeed, whatever it does; it is just that it does not do anything. Its act is of no interest; it is "purely" zero. But

together the *blob* of particles is (b) pure potentiality, because one can fabricate anything out of them. What is split in prime matter between one and many is united in God. Thus, God is (b') pure potentiality, insofar as He could eternally self-actualize into anything at all; God could have "become" a rock, a horse, a man; though He thankfully (by begetting the Son) chose to be God, a perfect being on the 2nd level. At the same time, God is (a') pure act, insofar as He is most soundly alive and happy; His act, the subjective experience of being God, is infinitely wonderful. In short, God and prime matter differ from each other not by what they are *not* but by what they *are*, though even here we might say that God is absolutely free to act; and prime matter is absolutely free to be acted on.

The perfection of the 2nd level lies (1) in the *spiritual integrity* of God, (2) in His *nobility and excellence*, and (3) in *happiness*.

Be careful not to confuse (1st-level) freedom with (2nd-level) power. Some political philosophers make a distinction between the positive and negative senses of liberty. Yet there is actually no such thing as "positive sense of liberty." Freedom is defined aptly as "the absence of necessity, coercion, or constraint in choice or action" or "liberation from slavery or restraint or from the power of another." "Positive sense of liberty" is not liberty at all; it is power: to act, to accomplish goals. *Freedom* is the ability to choose between *A*, *B*, or *C*, i.e., being presented with alternatives and having permission from some genuine authority to pick one of them. *Power* is the ability to bring about good consequences as a result of making a particular choice.

We have already seen how God's consummate happiness, at least in His pre-creation state, and His ad intra omnipotence are linked.

The perfection of the 3rd level is in *self-diffusion of divine goodness* and in *world without end*. Thus, for example, God was *free* to make the world in which 2 and 2 added to 5 but lacked the *power* to do so; just as God had the *power* to make the world in which saints went to hell, but His *goodness* overruled.

1.4. Aristotelian causation

In addition to physical, teleological, and divine-grounding causation, there is also the Aristotelian causation. For physical causation, natural law dragged the world from state S_1 at t_1 to S_2 at t_2. The motion of the cue ball at t_1 *in the past* is responsible for the present motion of the 8 ball toward the corner pocket. Physical causation thus has the cause *before* the effect. The four physical subcauses are matter and energy transforming each other through motion and radiation respectively (so, motion causes motion, etc.).

For teleological causation, a contemplated satisfaction impels a person to get into action to attain his end. Imagining S_2 at t_2 *in the future*

has driven him to act right now. Teleological causation then has the cause, expected future utility, *after* the effect, human action. The four teleological subcauses, i.e., the four goods, will be defined in Chapter 2. The two types of causation make the world evolve, change from one point to the next. They introduce induced motion to merely inertial motion (for 1st-grade things like rocks), and creative advance to a mere evenly rotating economy (for 2nd-grade humans).

Grounding causation has an *eternal* divine cause over the entire temporal effect, meaning that God is *timelessly parallel* with the creation of the universe. There are four divine subcauses: creation, redemption, sanctification, and entrance into glory in heaven. Of course, this is not the place to discuss these.

Finally, Aristotelian causation sustains a thing, call it *X*, in existence *right now*; it is *concurrent* with the effect. There are (surprise!) four Aristotelian subcauses: take even a single one of them away, and *X* vanishes in a puff of smoke. The material cause answers the question "What is *X* made of?"; the efficient cause, "How does *X* work?"; the final cause, "What is *X*'s purpose? What is it for?"; and the formal cause, "What is *X*?" These are arranged in a hierarchy, with the material cause as the most primitive and the formal cause as the most sophisticated, in terms of the information they supply. Each higher cause subsumes all the lower ones. The four general causes are about the *maker*; the four Aristotelian subcauses are about the *thing made*.

There is a spatial analogy here. Imagine a disk *D* symbolizing the effect. In the first contrast, *material* causes are points inside *D*, *contained in* it, as a whole consists of parts. For *efficient* causation, in theology it is sometimes distinguished between a "creating" efficient cause and a "sustaining" efficient cause. The idea is that God both created the world in the past and somehow keeps it in being right now. This is a serious blunder. The creating cause is in fact grounding causation by the eternal God; the sustaining Aristotelian efficient subcause is the forces (physical forces, chemical bonds, whatever) that keep objects together according to abstract laws of nature. The efficient cause is the universal set *containing D*. For *final* causation, the reason why *D* exists is that it is useful to me somehow. The final cause explains why *D* exists in two senses: first, physical essences are both individual and social constructs (social insofar as an object acquires a purpose through the market process), and *D* would not be *D* without its present manner of employment; second, because if no one wants to keep it around, then *D* will sit there rusting or depreciate and eventually corrupt; or people will salvage it for parts. Unlike Aristotelian final subcausation, teleological causation refers not to *D* but to me making *D*. It describes the state of affairs before *D* even existed. My desire for *D* caused me to have a teleological goal to obtain it and to strive to realize it; now that *D* exists,

its final purpose or end is to gratify me. In the second contrast, the final cause which is my pleasure is the *surface* of *D* because it is that which partitions the world and separates *D* from all other things. The *formal* cause is *coextensive* with *D*, defining it, indeed *D* just is its formal cause joined with existence.

A classic difference between material and efficient causes can be discerned by a critique of the pages of Moore's *Principia Ethica* where the author discusses the part-whole relationship called "organic unity." (We'll deal with Moore's ethics later.) He describes one meaning attached to this term like so:

> But finally (3) the sense which has been most prominent in recent uses of the term "organic whole" is one whereby it asserts the parts of such a whole to have a property which the parts of no whole can possibly have.
>
> It is supposed that just as the whole would not be what it is but for the existence of the parts, so the parts would not be what they are but for the existence of the whole; and this is understood to mean not merely that any particular part could not exist unless the others existed too…, but actually that the part is no distinct object of thought – that the whole, of which it is a part, is in its turn a part of it. …
>
> This supposition is self-contradictory…[41]

Moore uses a narrow definition of "part" which he understands as "material cause." When the meaning of this word is restricted in this way, then of course the proposition "the whole subsists in one of its parts" makes no sense. For example, it is self-evident that the whole is no smaller than any of its (material) parts. But if *A* contains and is bigger than *B*, then for *A* to be a part of and contained in *B* would require it to be at the same time smaller than *B*. Which is absurd. If, however, we generalize "part" into "cause," then it is easy to grasp how, for example, the entire human body *including the arm* is an *efficient* cause of the arm. We observed above that the efficient cause of a thing answers the question "How does this thing work?" But it is impossible to understand how an arm works unless we take into consideration both (a) the fact that the arm is attached to the body and (b) the entire body as a whole. It is the whole body that causes the arm to work. Cut the body off, and it no longer works. Its efficient cause – that which makes it do the things that arms do – is gone; and hence the effect, i.e., the working arm, disappears along with it. In this sense, the whole, i.e., the body, is definitely *in* its part, i.e., the arm. The arm is part / material cause of the body, and the body is part / efficient cause of the arm. In its capacity as efficient cause, the body "permeates" the arm.

The difference between a mechanical and organic whole is that in

the latter both the whole and the parts are alive, and both allow each other not only to work but to live, as well. Otherwise, mechanical wholes are also efficient causes of their parts. A car is a complex mechanical whole. Yet it is possible to shut off the engine, disassemble the car into its component parts, then put it back together, and have the car work perfectly well. The human *soul* may be defined as, among other things, that aspect of humanity that prevents us from performing a similar procedure on a living person: it is hardly possible to kill a man, carve his body into organs and cells, then stitch them back up and reanimate him: according to my triplist metaphysics at least, Dr. Frankenstein remains a fantasy character. In other words, a man can die permanently; a machine can always be revived by repair technicians.

Regarding economics, while Crusoe economics yields important insights, for genuine understanding of this science we need to examine social cooperation among many human beings. Mises endorses this view as follows:

> The market process is coherent and indivisible. It is an indissoluble intertwinement of actions and reactions, of moves and countermoves. But the insufficiency of our mental abilities enjoins upon us the necessity of dividing it into parts and analyzing each of these parts separately. In resorting to such artificial cleavages, we must never forget that the seemingly autonomous existence of these parts is an imaginary makeshift of our minds. They are only parts, that is, they cannot even be thought of as existing outside the structure of which they are parts.[42]

Society and the economy as a whole are efficient causes of human beings and human actions. Studying a man in isolation from society is only of limited interest – though this won't stop us from contemplating Crusoe and his cannibal buddy Friday later in an attempt to deduce some ethical truths.

Both nature and man-made contraptions have their own efficient causes. For sciences, the question "How do things work?" will be answered differently depending on whether you approach it from physics on the lowest level, philosophy on the highest, or something in between. The methods of uncovering such secrets will be different too depending on the science.

We can drill down a little further. The physical and spiritual worlds will each have their own Aristotelian (sub)causes. For the former, the material cause itself has four states: solid, liquid, gas, and plasma corresponding to the traditional elements of earth, water, air, and fire. The efficient cause is divided into the four fundamental laws of nature dealing with gravity, weak, electromagnetic, and strong forces.

The final cause can be useful, virtuous, and pleasant. A *useful* good is a capital good, a "higher-order" factor of production harnessed in order to manufacture "first-order" *virtuous* consumer goods that have the potential directly to cater to human desires. The pleasant good is twofold: on the one hand, it is a negative end to felt dissatisfaction, a *desire being fulfilled*; on the other, it is positive *pleasure* or utility being felt by a person upon consuming a virtuous good. The formal cause splits into truth, beauty, goodness, and unity.

For prime matter, its material cause is within it; all other causes are outside. This includes even the efficient cause, because prime matter does not "work" or function in any way; it's utterly inert. Someone must still go to the trouble of making the quarks and electrons with it.

Familiar 1st-grade objects have the material and efficient causes objectively, in themselves. When we ask, "What makes this car exist right now?" the answer is, "The fact that it's made of such and such materials and works in a certain way." Now a composite object can be destroyed by being taken apart. But matter is precisely the parts. One cannot disassemble an elementary particle. Then there is the law of conservation of matter and energy. Material causes are ultimately indestructible. An efficient cause can be thought of as, among other things, an object's power of self-preservation. That power is innate, though it can be overwhelmed by a stronger force but still according to law. It's hard to say how matter "knows" the laws it is bound by, but the important thing is that it does, and very well. The car's final cause – its utility to me – however, is outside of it; it is subjective and depends on my state of mind. Should I (and everyone else) figure that the car is no longer of any use, the car will be instantly obliterated as a distinctive piece of human art and will not, at any rate, survive for long. By extension, the formal cause of a car no longer depends so exclusively on what the car is made of (the material cause) or how it works (the efficient cause) but more on what it is for (the final cause). A car that is repurposed from one task to another literally becomes a different thing.

Supervenience of a "higher" *B* on a "lower" *A* means that the same *A* entails the same *B*, or, alternatively, a difference in *B* for two things is due entirely to the differences in *A* in them. (We'll draw upon this notion in metaethics in due course.) The Aristotelian causes supervene on each other in the reverse order of their hierarchy. Probably the easiest supervenience to see is that of material cause on efficient. If *X* and *Y* have the same efficient cause, i.e., they work or function in exactly the same way, then by that very fact they must have the same material cause, i.e., they are composed of the same stuff. Or: if any two objects are made of different matter (say, water and oil), then some of their behaviors will be different. (But not the reverse – prime matter can be made into a variety of substances.) How could we even assert that *X*

and *Y* are two different chemicals, say, if every test we ran on them produced the exact same results? At the limit, if absolutely every behavior of *X* and *Y* were the same, then we'd have to conclude that *X* and *Y* are made of the same material. Going a step further, if *X* and *Y* are, say, two identical wooden planks, then their having the same material and efficient causes does not guarantee that they will be used in the same way. For example, one plank can be made into a desk; the other, into a door. At the limit, however, if we (i.e., together as a race) could find absolutely no employment of *X* and *Y* at serving human ends wherein their efficacy or utility differed, then we wouldn't be interested in differentiating their efficient causes. Just as in the first supervenience, we could not *know* if two identically working things were in fact composed of different substances, so in the second supervenience we would not *care* if the two identically used things worked differently. In both cases, the differences in the lower causes *fade* and become of no import upon the similarities of the higher causes. Lastly, if any *X* and *Y* are designated formally the same (recall that the formal cause of *X* is the answer to the question "What is *X*?"), then their final causes are also identical, and through that, also efficient causes, and in their own turn, material causes. "What *X* is" includes into itself but is not limited to all the information provided by answering "What is *X* made of?," "How does *X* work?," and "What is *X* for?" Surely, we are powerless to use in different ways any two things that *are* the same simply in every respect. At the same time, the answers to all three questions may be the same for *X* and *Y*, yet their forms may still be different. For example, one wooden door to the storage room could be 1 mm higher than the other yet secure the room and all that that implies equally well.

2nd-grade objects, such as humans, have in addition their final causes within. For they exist for no second party's pleasure but for their own. Their final cause, their purpose is their own happiness and joy and their pursuit. It is impossible to extract the desire and search for happiness from a human being. A person may fail at times in his undertakings but will eventually correct himself. A man *essentially* is no one's tool, though of course people do make use of each other, say, in the market or within a firm. He is an end in himself. If a material thing has a final cause, it is usefulness or virtue; pleasantness is the final cause of man. However, a man's formal cause, i.e., the answer to the question "What / who am I?" is still external and will only be revealed to him upon entrance to heaven in glory. Even then, we will be what God makes us into. It is for that reason that God can be trusted. For what we will turn out to be is ultimately His responsibility. If God is good and has the world, humanity, and each individual in His hands, then our hope in Him will not be disappointed. In order to find out what a person is in all his unique individuality who is in the process of becoming, then,

we'd have to query God and His mysterious designs.

Finally, for God, even His formal cause is within Him; God is 100% what He is, complete and perfect. God's essence is objective and depends on no special perspective. He is good (the Father), true (the Son), one (the Holy Spirit), and beautiful (heaven), and the source of these perfections in creatures.

These distinctions are summarized in Table 8.

Grade	Aristotelian Causes			
	Material	Efficient	Final	Formal
3rd, God	*inside*	*inside*	*inside*	*inside*
2nd, Humans	*inside*	*inside*	*inside*	outside
1st, Rocks	*inside*	*inside*	outside	outside
0th, Prime Matter	*inside*	outside	outside	outside

Table 8. Aristotelian causes of the grades.

Footnotes

a. Stove's examples of human maladaptive traits "under just two letters of the alphabet" are: "Abortion; Adoption; the popularity of Alcohol; Altruism; love of, and from, Animals of other species; the importance attached to Art; Asceticism (sexual, dietary, or whatever); Heirs who respect the wishes of dead parents; Heroes; the admiration of Heroism; Homosexuality; the idea of Honor; Horror at the struggle for life in other species; Humaneness; Humor." (214-5) It remains to be asked: is it humans who are an "error," or is it Darwinism?

b. This reminds me of the movie *Monsters vs. Aliens*, in which a monster is introduced as follows: "A genetically altered tomato was combined with a chemically altered ranch-flavored dessert topping at a snack food plant. The resulting goop gained consciousness…" Materialist and evolutionary explanations, such as they are, are equally comedic.

c. Ayer argues, citing Wittgenstein, that "our justification for holding that the world could not conceivably disobey the laws of logic is simply that we could not say of an unlogical world how it would look" (*Language*, 80), but this confuses what is conceivable with what is possible. A chiliagon is possible, and maybe even actual perhaps as some strange artwork, but it is probably inconceivable by the imagination. The universe as whole is both possible and actual, but it cannot be conceived by any human intellect in its entire complexity. An illogical world is absolutely impossible, not merely difficult to picture in the mind's eye; it cannot "look" like anything, because it cannot exist at all.

Ayer goes on: "It is an arbitrary, though convenient, rule of language that words that stand for temporal relations are to be used transitively; but, given this rule, the proposition that, if *A* is earlier than *B* and *B* is earlier than *C*, *A* is earlier than *C*

becomes a necessary truth." (186-7) It's not a "rule of language"; it's how Mr. Time works!

Endnotes

1. *HA*, 11.

2. Kluger, "Map."

3. Dawkins, *Gene*, xxi.

4. Gibbard, *Wise Choices*, 29.

5. Sidgwick, *Methods*, 191.

6. Gibbard, *Wise Choices*, 67.

7. Stove, *Fairytales*, 224.

8. *HA*, 668.

9. Gibbard, *Wise Choices*, 281.

10. Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence*, 6.

11. Gibbard, *Wise Choices*, 57.

12. Ibid., 28.

13. Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence*, 6.

14. Ibid., 7.

15. Dawkins, *Climbing*, 272.

16. Hauser, *Moral Minds*, 384.

17. Landsburg, *Questions*, 16-7.

18. Mises, *Ultimate*, 30.

19. Kreeft, *Handbook*, 250.

20. Weaver, *Visions*, 150.

21. Nozick, *Explanations*, 464.

22. Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, II, 13.

23. Boethius, *Consolations*, Book 3, II.

24. *HA*, 38.

25. Harman, “Ethics and Observation” in Sayre-McCord, *Essays*, 120; 124.

26. Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, 1216^{a}25.

27. Marshall, *Principles*, 2.

28. Mises, *Liberalism*, 190.

29. *HA*, 155.

30. Wicksteed, *Common Sense*, 154.

31. This terminology originates with Morris (2001).

32. Mises, *Theory and History*, 245-6.

33. Reid, *Collected Works*, B.III.IV, 346.

34. Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253^{a}1.

35. Moore, *Principia*, §18.

36. *ST*, I, 12, 7, reply 1.

37. *ST*, I, 19, 2, reply 3.

38. *HA*, 69.

39. *HA*, 25.

40. *ST*, I, 3, 8.

41. Moore, *Principia*, §22.

42. *HA*, 333.

2. Nature of Goodness

As we have seen, a man has a nature, personality, and he pursues narrow happiness. For the first, there are other human beings beside him; for the second, there is his own soul and its health; for the third, there are the material world and plants and animals below him. Finally, there is God above. There are therefore four relations: between man and material objects which generates *physical* goods; between a man and himself and especially between the constituent parts of his soul which we'll call *moral* goods; between one man and his fellows who are *metaphysical* goods for each other; and between man and God who is the *divine* good. The following formulas will serve us well:

Physical good	=	what is loved and what ought to be;
Moral good	=	what ought to be loved and what ought to be;
Metaphysical good	=	what is and what ought to be loved;
Divine good	=	what is and what is loved.

In short, metaphysical goods correspond to nature in Tables 3 and 4; moral goods, to (the content of) personality; and physical goods, to narrow happiness.

The terms "good" and "ought" are related generally as follows: ought suggests a striving to conform to an ideal (of varying sorts) from which it is possible to fall short, from which things often actually do fall short, but which is sometimes possible to achieve, and this ideal is good.

We have described physical goods in the Introduction. Physical goods are purely subjective, i.e., something is good because I value it, because it cheers me up somehow, and that is that. I first value something, and then and because of it, it becomes good; and if I didn't value it, then it wouldn't be physically good (for me). The fact that the cake is sweet and fluffy together with my taste for such things causes me to value or love or enjoy the cake; my valuing the cake causes it to become subjectively + relatively + physically good for me. The judgment is *of* the subject *for* an object. Physical goodness then covers all the things that beget pleasure or "utility," whether directly as consumer goods or general conditions of human welfare like air or indirectly as factors of production. *Man*, as we will see, is a metaphysical good; human *labor* is a "physical service." Ideal things like scientific and technological knowledge can be physical goods. "Ought to

be" here signifies two things: first, that the good was chosen out of a swarm of possibilities all of which except that good were rejected; second, that there are costs to bringing it about or maintaining it. The good is required to be only by the chooser's own fiat, and it is he who is ultimately expected to bring it into existence. Metaphysical goods are objective; so, first something is good, and then I "had better" value it (or else). Loving metaphysical goods is essential, lest one's nature be corrupted. It's a sin to fail to love as one ought. Here the object judges and decides the destiny of the subject. Some metaphysical goods like humans are absolute – all humans are to love each other; others like pets are not – if I have uplifted a cat into fellowship with me, I and no one else ought to love the cat. Moral goods, though also objective, are for all that arbitrary, meaning that they still judge us but less harshly and zealously. It might seem odd at first glance that the definition of the divine good sounds simply like present pleasure. But this is no accident. God just is His own subjective experience or "pure act" of His self-contemplation and sheer enjoyment of it. For a man to feel any pleasure whatsoever is to partake of the inconceivably happy life of God. The divine good is further understood as that which exists necessarily, in all possible worlds, and is loveable essentially. No creature can behold God as He is and not love Him and rejoice completely. Nothing else in the universe is like that.

Regarding metaphysical goods which is the subject matter of ethics, and which will be our main concern, we need to distinguish between God's point of view and man's. From God's point of view, *all* things that have a nature are metaphysically good, though some are better than others. This is because a thing's goodness is proportional to the richness of its essence, and God loves (and cannot help loving as per His nature of divine goodness) all His creatures, from the highest to the lowest. To illustrate: Socrates is better than a pig *metaphysically*; Socrates is better than a fool *morally*; and Socrates satisfied is better than Socrates dissatisfied *physically*. Metaphysical goods *do not need* a soul loving them in order to be good; physical goods *require* a soul loving them to be good; and moral goods are the result of a soul *judging itself*. But from the human point of view, only man is metaphysically good, because only man ought to be loved by another man. The natures of coffee and mosquitoes need not by right evoke loving feelings in man, unlike in God.

Meditate on the distinction between a good and loving a good in terms of the difference between judgment (an act of the intellect: good / evil) and sentiment (an act of the will: loving / hating). Suppose that a thing is good if and to the extent that it induces pleasure. Goodness, therefore, seems to be an altogether derivative notion, defined exclusively in terms of the satisfaction it fosters in the lover. I will grant

that, but this piece of reasoning holds true only in the case of *physical* goods. The reason to keep judgment and love separate is in order to account for the different directions of causation for physical, moral, and metaphysical goods. For physical goods, goodness is indeed reducible to pleasure: "I see that you like it; no wonder you say it is good (for you)." But for metaphysical goods, causation runs in the opposite direction: "It is good, so it is obvious why you (and everyone else) are obligated to love it." Consider Socrates again, only this time he is infected with pathogenic bacteria. Now both Socrates and bacteria have more or less objective essences and therefore a modicum of metaphysical goodness, having a claim on God's love (or at least regard) for them. As St. Thomas would say, everything that exists is good and good to the extent that it exists. Two points, however, make this situation interesting. First, Socrates and the bacteria are natural enemies. Second, Socrates' nature far exceeds the nature of the bacteria. As Peter Kreeft explains,

> We recognize the inherent superiority of all those ways of being that expand possibilities, free us from the constricting confines of matter, and allow us to share in, enrich and be enriched by, the being of other things. In other words, we all recognize that intelligent being is better than unintelligent being; that a being able to give and receive love is better than one that cannot; that our way of being is better, richer, and fuller than that of a stone, a flower, an earthworm, an ant, or even a baby seal.[1]

In other words, that Socrates is metaphysically better than bacteria is true self-evidently from "wisdom." (PETA's slogan "A Rat Is a Pig Is a Dog Is a Boy" sounds like something out of a horror movie.) But wherein there is a conflict of interests such as postulated here, the more perfect wins over the less perfect, and so we are permitted to will good to Socrates in helping him to recover and to will evil to the bacteria in designing for them a speedy death.

Fallen angels represent an interesting case: we are enemies, but this time it is they who are superior to us. Despite their eminence, demons are not metaphysical goods from man's point of view. First, we cannot will good to them because their good consists in our ruin. Second, our love for God and His justice precludes loving demons who are condemned to hell.

These loves are conditional. For metaphysical goods, for example, we have it that *X* is good, and therefore and because of that goodness, I (ought to) love it. Unconditional love, specifically God's, is a special case: the entirety of *X*'s goodness is due to God's willing this good to *X* (at least ultimately as first cause), to infusing goodness into *X*, to His love for it. This love is unconditional because the conditions themselves,

including the evils as privations of what ought to be there, are part of what God gave *X*. It might be objected that love is a feeling, and "infusing goodness," as an act, seems to lack it. But there is no reason why God, being Himself divinely good, cannot enjoy creating things and enjoy creating better things more. Another objection is that love in addition involves a union of hearts. But creation is precisely the first (though not the last) form of communion as God shares His being and likeness with creatures.

Goodness is not an ultimate given but is produced by human powers of judgment (which are). We have touched briefly on the intellectual powers of "apprehension of the truth": knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. Connected with them are the powers of "judgment concerning the truth": the moral virtue of *prudence* for physical goods; the moral virtue of *metaphorical justice* for moral goods; the moral virtue of *interpersonal justice* for metaphysical goods; and the intellectual virtue of *wisdom* for the divine good and hence for every created thing that emanates therefrom. Table 9 summarizes. Justice is concerned with nurturing harmonious progress: of the soul of a person for metaphorical justice and of the human race for interpersonal justice, with all parts of a complex system working, and growing, as one. The virtues correspond neatly to the chakra model of the human soul illustrated in Table 10 and Figure 1. Each virtue is its chakra's perfection.

Judgement	**Good**	**Apprehension**	**Method**
Wisdom	Divine	Wisdom	Deductive
Interpersonal justice	Metaphysical	Understanding	Synthetic
Metaphorical justice	Moral		
Prudence	Physical	Knowledge	Inductive
Analytic			

Table 9. Types of judgments.

I speculate that a temperament arises when the orange, yellow, green, or blue chakra is somehow empowered. To place Barely Humans and Monsters in our system, we must observe that there are three kinds of power in the world: destructive, protective, and creative. Destructive power is genderless, protective power is Guardian yin, and creative power is Artisan yang. Protective power manifests feminine receptivity in this sense: once matter has received an imprint from its maker, it holds and clings to it, it does not melt away or disintegrate. Protection also involves restoration of equilibrium or calm, of order, which again is yin. So it posits a stable thing which repairs or rights itself when

disturbed. Any use of power makes one deserve something. For destructive power, you deserve punishment through evildoing. We can distinguish between two pairs of archetypes of protective/creative power: worker/entrepreneur and drudge/artist. The drudge works to sustain himself in an equilibrium and hence deserves the fruits of his labor through sacrifice. The artist deserves his output through a kind of imitation of sovereignty of God. Again, the worker deserves his marginal product; the entrepreneur, by imbuing old things with new value, new final causes, deserves his profits. (In between them, the capitalist deserves his interest return through relatively lower time preferences.) The destructive power of Monsters and Barely Humans who are both infrared is just what the red chakra, representing fear of the law and fruit in the nature trinity as culmination of progress in this area, *neutralizes*.

It might seem that charity and wisdom are the greatest virtues, how can they give birth to something as lowly as fear of the law? The answer is that the greatness and lowliness here are incommensurable. Charity is a theological virtue and wisdom, intellectual, while fear is a *moral* virtue and the foundation for *active* life to be built up in the following two trinities. It is not repugnant to reason for a high thing of one species to give rise to a low thing of another species that is somehow consequent to it.

I think Keirsey confuses Artisans with Barely Humans because both are yang or "hot" types, and because both are "utilitarian," as in results-oriented. But Artisans have a conscience, and BHs do not. And he confuses Artisans with Monsters because both are chaotic, both "break the rules." But Artisans are creators who break the rules to bring novel beauty into the world, while Monsters are destroyers who bring suffering and evil. Note that though the *will* is located close to the *green chakra* (which is the seat of Idealist metaphorical justice), they are separate faculties.

Interpersonal justice which takes man's point of view and wisdom (as judgment) which takes God's complement each other in the practice of ethics; understanding and wisdom (as apprehension) complement each other for its theory, such that ethics becomes an aspect of human worldly wisdom. Wisdom is the power to grasp the relations between things, how everything fits together. "It is the part of a wise man to arrange and to judge," says St. Thomas.[2] "It belongs to wisdom to set things in order."[3] One difference between human and angelic wisdom as apprehension is that humans have to deduce things laboriously, while angels slurp up essences all at once.

Chakra Location	Color	Description	Virtue	Divine Gift

Crown		Speculative reason: Judgment concerning the truth	Wisdom	Wisdom
Brow	Indigo	Speculative reason: Apprehension of the truth	Wisdom	
~~Understanding Knowledge~~	~~Understanding Knowledge~~			
Throat	Blue	Practical reason	Prudence	Counsel
~~Heart~~	~~Green~~	~~Emotions~~	~~Justice~~	~~Piety~~
~~Solar plexus~~	~~Yellow~~	Irascible passions (active, that attack and defend)	~~Fortitude~~	~~Fortitude~~
Spleen	Orange	Concupiscible passions (passive, that are attracted to pleasure and flee from pain)	Temperance	
Root	Red	Vegetative soul (lifeforce)		Fear of the law

Table 10. Chakras, virtues, and gifts.

Wisdom deals with the highest causes including the first cause and judges the world as God does, sorting all things into better and worse and indeed good and evil. If we saw God face-to-face, that He is the highest-level or 3rd-level goodness would be the first deliverance of wisdom. But because we do not, and because our world is full of evil, it is the last. Because of the problem of evil, each person must decide for himself whether God is *good enough*. The "absolute" question of whether God is good is linked to the "relative" question of whether life is worth living, whether one wants to live or die, and in fact both questions are sometimes answered together.

Interpersonal justice, being unlike metaphorical justice a composite virtue, also engages prudence insofar as it must be shown that standing in just relations with fellow men is rational or accords

with enlightened self-interest.

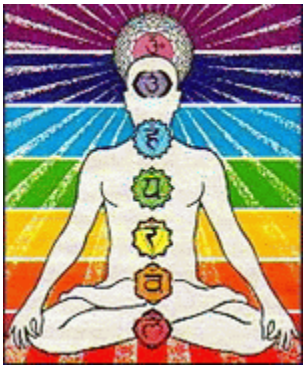

Figure 1. A model of the human soul.

But why is man a metaphysical good? Why ought man to be loved; why isn't one man instead wolf to another? To this question we now turn by endeavoring to prove a few propositions of basic morality as aspects of natural law. Now there are three lawgivers within society. Aristotle considered democracy to be a corruption of "commonwealth" which is presumably a society imbued with brotherly feelings and eschewing parasitism and exploitation of minorities by majorities as a way of governing. Otherwise, without goodwill, democracy is indeed two wolves and a sheep deciding what to have for dinner. He also lists oligarchy as a corruption of aristocracy, and tyranny as a corruption of royal rule or monarchy.[4] We can arrange the systems in the following pattern: the legislature should represent the entire commonwealth; the executive branch is royal; and judges, though they may be private professionals, that is, not on the payroll of the government, rule as an aristocracy. (A "republic" would then be a government structured in this way.) This natural system would have the judicial branch "discovering" and enforcing *natural* law; the legislature enacting man-made *positive* law that may not contradict natural law; and the king / president making *administrative* law, such as managing state properties like roads. The fundamental principle of natural law, William Blackstone writes, is that "man should pursue his own true and substantial happiness." Whatever conduces to such is lawful; whatever ruins true happiness is unlawful. "This law of nature," he goes on, "dictated by God Himself… is binding over all the globe in all countries, and at all times: no human laws are of any validity, if contrary to this…"[5] There is a link between justice and happiness.

The term "rule of law" then is somewhat complex. *Natural* law is addressed to the citizens, commanding them not to do certain things, like kill. It also places strict limits on the state. Positive law, in stark contrast, is addressed to the government police, bidding them to impose

sanctions for certain behaviors. Positive law does not command citizens but only creates incentives for them. Nobody *has* to obey the cops, lest he debase his soul. A person is technically free to break any positive law if he can get away with it. He can do the crime, if he calculates that he is willing to run the risk of doing the time. This distinction tends toward anarchy. If taxes, for example, are a scandalous affliction, that is, if taxation is theft, then it is unjust and contrary to natural law. The state then is denied all special powers, be they economic regulation, search warrants, or conscription. If the judicial branch is first among equals, and no government agent can run afoul of it, then there is scarcely any such thing as a "sovereign state," only indeed sovereign individuals. As we'll see, this view of natural law falls a bit short.

Natural law is discovered from the bottom up. The procedure is familiar in common law: case by case and precedent by precedent. It is different from common law in the sense that it does not defer to tradition blindly; a given law ought to be retained because it is just or economically efficient, not because of the intrinsic value of traditional customs. If the basic principles are self-evident axioms, and legal decisions are theorems derived those axioms, then natural law proceeds from one previously established theorem to another. This is the deductive method, from general to particular.

Does that mean that any judge, no matter how lowly, would have the power to spin the entirety of natural law from his own reasoning anew? No more than modern mathematicians are free to remake Euclidian geometry from ground up. Geometry has of course seen massive progress since its ancient origins, but the insights of Euclid still hold presumably because they are true. They are true at least in the sense that they work. If a judge were to innovate, he'd have to prove his case rigorously in the court's stated opinion and submit his proof to the judgment of his peers. In practice, deference to tradition, what is called stare decisis, would be considerable in natural lawmaking. As there are few genuinely gifted mathematicians, so there would be only a handful of judges capable of the heights of perspicacity necessary for uncovering novel tenets of natural law. Judges of course make atrocious rulings all the time, but in the long run we can expect some progress.

Positive law made by the legislature, on the contrary, is top-down. The full comprehensive system of it descends on society all at the same time. This system must cohere, be well-proportioned, and satisfy some form of political or passive utilitarianism: it must on the whole promote the greatest good for the greatest number. Such legislation is clearly an ambitious project and often fails precisely because of its complexity. It is not axiomatic-deductive but synthetic and ideological. If it be attempted, it would never fall to individual judges who lack the providential foresight to care for the entire community; but instead to

the elected legislature with its measure of deliberative prudence and ability to take into account and weigh numerous interests within society. I am not saying that the legislature is always or even usually competent to make decent positive law, only that it is by its nature *more* competent at it than the judicial branch.

Consider then, as an example and illustration, a proof of the proposition, "You ought not to kill (i.e., murder)." A view I will defend later is that a statement such as this is a command of human reason rooted in its grasp of human nature imposed on all men regardless of their particular aims. Yet it remains true that it is man's nature to strive for ends, to have desires of which he seeks satisfaction. It is mysterious at first glance why anyone should obey any *commands*. If Robinson Crusoe on his desert island encounters Friday, why shouldn't he, for example, liquidate him posthaste if he so prefers? Who shall be insolent enough to bark orders at Crusoe? Why, in other words, is it somehow unnatural to murder one's fellow men? David Hume, for example, pronounced that "it is not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger."[6] Reason for Hume is reduced to churning out means to arbitrarily selected ends. It cannot judge the ends themselves, such as indeed the end of murdering another person. And if Attila the Hun tells us that he revels in his cruelty, then how can we possibly dissuade him?

To begin with, there are four general relations possible between human beings. In the order of increasing dignity and sophistication, they are: hostility, equality, hierarchy, and complementarity. Mises actually denies that hostility is a genuine human relation: "The hostile acts themselves are not only asocial, but antisocial. It is inexpedient to define the term 'social relationships' in such a way as to include actions which aim at other people's annihilation and at the frustration of their actions. Where the only relations between men are those directed at mutual detriment, there is neither society nor societal relations,"[7] and yet I consider it to be a relation insofar as in being hostile to other humans, one still separates them from all other things; one still deems them conspecifics. One who wills evil to rocks is completely irrational; one who hates humans at least acknowledges them as special creatures. Crusoe who pounces on Friday still cleaves his victim from the natural order; he hates Friday precisely because Friday is human. He would not thereby hate a tree. Something surely crazy is going on in Crusoe's mind, but he is not completely beyond hope as he would be if were fully feral, if he did not even understand that Friday, like him, was human. Hostility also has legitimate roles, such as in market competition. The relations correspond broadly, first, to the traditional four economic systems: autarkic total war, primitive communism, feudalism, and capitalism; second, to the intensity of dominance of one man over

another, in the descending order: Crusoe can kill Friday, enslave him (all Crusoe's slaves are equal scum to him), tax him, or cooperate with him on equal terms. If Crusoe up and slaughters Friday, he will be displaying hostility to Friday, the most vulgar type of relation. In so doing, will he be acting in his true self-interest? Crusoe's savage antipathy for Friday has distinct costs. For example, Crusoe might be better off letting Friday live and keeping him as a chattel. People are useful that way, and this will be progress for both men.

Unfortunately, slave labor is very unproductive: there is no motivation for slaves to learn and apply themselves. The slave has few incentives to increase his productivity, in fact he may want to hide his talents lest he be forced into more challenging work. Corporal punishment is not sufficient to elicit outstanding, and improving, performance. Michael Bush writes that "slaves had their own devices for remedying the gross imbalance of advantage created by the slave-master relationship, notably feigned stupidity, working within limits and only to order, abiding by custom, malingering, petty theft, and so on."[8] Free workers tend to exhibit the exact opposite attitudes, in so doing outcompeting the slaves. Nevertheless, slavery was fundamentally a *system of production* and as such a definite step up from the war of all against all. It was humanity's attempt to create wealth long before laissez-faire capitalism came to pass. It's a very inefficient system, but it does not deserve its reputation as some sort of sadistic destruction of the slaves' dignity for its own sake. Consider the family of the Biblical Jacob. Jacob's sons were not their father's thralls. But do you really think Reuben or Joseph could up and say to him, "Dad, I quit tending the flocks for you. I found a new job with Canaanites, Inc. in the next town. It pays more, and there is less commute"? A free worker has a powerful incentive to develop subtle skills up to and including unique creativity for use with complex capital and methods of production. But with the economy at that primitive a stage, there was little individual use in being free, and little social benefit to free labor. Why be free when all the "jobs" out there are almost the same and unskilled? Perhaps the protection bestowed on a slave and a measure of personal liaison with the master might be prized more (indeed, a slave who ran away was in serious danger of starving in the wild). This point is illustrated by the story of Jacob's two marriages:

> After Jacob had stayed with him a full month, Laban said to him: "Should you serve me for nothing just because you are a relative of mine? Tell me what your wages should be."
>
> Because Jacob loved Rachel, he answered, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel."[9]

Again, given such coarse division of labor, most jobs in those

days were unskilled and paid equal subsistence wages. There was no advantage to being free. But if you more or less enslave yourself to a master, as Jacob did to Laban, perhaps he'll let you marry his daughter 7 years later.

Jacob's sons were his de facto slaves; later in Egypt the Israelites were de jure slaves, but their actual positions did not differ. For example, the Israelites "complained bitterly," as they wandered in the wilderness with Moses: "If only we had meat for food! We remember the fish we used to eat without cost in Egypt, and the cucumbers, the melons… But now we are famished; we have nothing to look forward to but this manna."[10] They longed to be slaves again with the slavery's attendant "job security." This is why de jure slavery persisted for so long everywhere in the world. Its inefficiency was masked by the fact that free labor was not any more productive than slave labor and for that reason could not command higher incomes than slave labor. The abolition of slavery went hand in hand with increasing prosperity and complexity of the economy. The pressure to free the workers intensified as people came to realize the social benefits of this; as more workers were freed, this freedom itself contributed to economic improvement. This virtuous circle eventually led to the complete eradication of slavery as an economic institution. Slavery, whether legal or practical, would not have endured even without any violent upheavals.

It may be objected that slavery was often sustained by war, such as when the citizens of the defeated tribe or town were enslaved. However, regarding that, in a war, *formerly free people* are subjugated. That is a definite economic retrogression. I am arguing rather that in the ancient world, and even not-so-ancient, slavery was the default, unsurprising, and economically neutral condition of almost *every* worker. It is true that there existed somewhat skilled artisans even then. But without mass production and accumulation of great amounts of capital, only very few of them were needed by society.

Even under hostility there might be room for ethics. For example, it might be true that if an enemy were to surrender, then you ought to spare his life. The chivalrous code of honor was one such ethics, as were the rules of justice in starting and conducting wars. Mises lamented in the middle of the 20th century: "How far we are today from the rules of international law developed in the age of limited warfare! Modern war is merciless, it does not spare pregnant women or infants; it is indiscriminate killing and destroying. It does not respect the rights of neutrals. Millions are killed, enslaved, or expelled from the dwelling places in which their ancestors lived for centuries."[11] It is arguable that the modern despots and conquerors were morally guilty even under the ideology of hostility, let alone the higher relations we identified.

The move from autarky to communism is straightforward: slaves

are more valuable than dead men. Certain technological and economic conditions must also be met, such as that a single overseer is able guard numerous slaves. Even without that condition, as we have seen, it makes little sense for de jure slaves to resist if they are also de facto slaves. Slavery withers away naturally when it becomes clear to slave owners that they can profit much more by renting the slaves out and *taxing* their income. Miraculously, the incentives to the former slave are to a great extent restored; he is vastly more productive because he gets to keep some of the fruits of his labor; and the former master receives a juicier dividend. Slavery has naturally been upgraded to tax serfdom which, too, eventually fades away under capitalism simply as unenforceable. When freedom is granted to entrepreneurs under capitalism, and the entire world is full of employment opportunities, serfs will run away and find new jobs thousands of miles away from their erstwhile tax lord who will be unable to track his wards or press his claim. The worker's employer will likely shelter and defend him from any inquiring tax lords. A caveat is that it is only *private* tax-lords that would eventually be on their way out. The *state* may require modest taxation; but our modern mammoth tax and interventionist welfare-warfare state is an aberration. It would never have existed but for the rise of socialist and "progressive" ideas.

There are two dualities in the world which together make up a quadriformity: unity-in-variety and change-amidst-permanence. Feudalism has the first kind of complementarity: its economy is already somewhat sophisticated, but it's static and fairly unchanging. As St. Thomas thought in his thoroughly post-slavery and inegalitarian but pre-capitalist times, one's vocation in life is permanent and allotted to him by divine providence. But the feudal hierarchy contains in itself the seeds of the second complementarity but does not fully realize it. Only when both workers and entrepreneurs are fully liberated does the human society and economy attain their earthly perfection. Workers are not bound to any business firm or "lord," nor to land, nor to the state; they are mobile, free to move from job to job and from place to place. The Church further has no coercive powers and cannot levy tithes. There are millions of companies competing with each other for labor; there are thousands of municipalities competing with each other for citizens. Taxes exist only on the local level and are trivial since the fierce competition between cities severely limits the local governments' taxing power. With virtually no taxes, capital accumulation and hence improvement in the people's standard of living forge ahead at the fastest possible pace. In their turn, entrepreneurs have the freedom to start new businesses, enter or exit any industry at will, hire and fire workers without restraints, buy and sell shares on the stock market. The forces of entrepreneurial disequilibration and disruption contend with the forces

of equilibration and restoration of harmony. This dynamic is the second complementarity, a perpetual chase between the yang and the yin. Entrepreneurial profits are a sign that resources were reallocated virtuously, to the consumers' benefit relative to their previous manner of employment; losses, that resources have been wasted. Individual success and the common good under capitalism are intertwined. Particular profits tend to disappear as equilibrators narrow the gap between prices and wages which in itself opens up opportunities for future disequilibration. As the feudal society is largely frozen, so the capitalist society constantly improves. The division of productive activities and of labor steadily becomes more *intensive* through ever deeper specialization, and more *extensive* as previously disconnected markets unite, thereby growing more efficient. A single global market united by free trade is the pinnacle of capitalist development. This fulfills the promise of the feudal mostly stagnant and so primitive complementarity which under capitalism becomes dynamic and progressive. The market then continuously increases both in complexity and unity at the same time. The economy's unity-in-variety burgeons via capitalistic change-amidst-permanence, the ceaseless process of new value creation. Complementarity is the relation of numerous specialized and seemingly lost pieces coalescing to form a beautiful whole, which in our case resolves into individuals arranging into a progressing economy.

At each step of the transition, the lower relationships are transcended yet not eliminated. Thus, under capitalism, hostility has the perfectly salutary and exciting form of business, worker, and consumer competition (hence the free market cannot be slandered with the "social Darwinism" label), as well as of the enforceable rights of self-ownership and to private property; equality becomes the noble equality under the law and absence of servility between people; and hierarchy finds its place in efficient organizations within firms, in unequal incomes and property holdings, and in differential respect people pay to each other's contributions.

Historically, the higher relations were always possible, but in past eras they were not always more profitable, and lower relations often sufficed. Even hostility in tribal warfare may have had uses such as to spur the invention of weapons and political unification. There is a mutual influence between the level of economic development and the grade of the relation.

In the movie *Mummy*, Beni, facing Imhotep about to kill him, prays in every language and to every deity for protection. Upon hearing Hebrew, Imhotep pulls back and says, "The language of the slaves… I may have use for you. And the rewards [shows gold]… will be great." Likewise, upgrading the relation step by step all the way to complementarity within the division of labor, specialization, and trade

particularly in a small society like our Crusoe and Friday, immediately assists Crusoe himself. This fact demonstrates that the metaphysical order of the relations is correct.

An isolated act of theft within a capitalist society is a different issue. Theft is a particularly inefficient form of predation. The thief may even kill a person in order to enable himself to take his stuff. Sporadic theft is an instance of a war of some against all. A more (diabolically) elegant and sagacious system, for example, is indeed state serfdom, wherein the thief imposes permanent taxes on his victims. Everyone gets to live, and the victim even retains an incentive to accumulate wealth, while the thief is enjoying an uninterrupted stream of looted income in relative safety. After all, the richer the people are, the more there is to steal. But ordinary theft just kills the goose that lays the golden eggs; it overexploits society. Moreover, the Crusoe-Friday interaction is not a one-off game which for all we know may be a Prisoner's Dilemma but a continuous invested-into process of cooperation from which both men straightforwardly benefit. That's why our focus in this discussion is on general *relations* of production.

By assassinating Friday then, Crusoe fails to manage him according to his nature and therefore deprives himself of a valuable human resource. If Crusoe knows what's good for number one, then he will *love* Friday if not as an end in himself, as would befit Crusoe if he were in the state of Christian grace, then at least as an important means to Crusoe's own ends. He would love and even care for Friday in much the same way he "loves" and cares for his boat while making the suitable distinctions between how to maintain a boat and how to maintain a human being. It would be in Crusoe's interest to ensure that Friday remains maximally productive, and that is only possible if Friday benefits from association with Crusoe as much as Crusoe does with Friday. Crusoe must actively *contrive* to make Friday better off in order for himself to profit. But it is impossible for Crusoe to both love and hate Friday at the same time. One of these desires must go, and by that I mean be suppressed utterly. Either Crusoe gratifies his murderous urges and forgoes greater opulence, or he chooses his own rightly understood pleasure and keeps Friday alive, treating him with justice.

The same is true for less and more efficient forms of social cooperation. Perhaps Crusoe enjoys the thought of stepping with his boot on Friday's face forever. He likes it for Friday to be his cringing bitch. But that entails enslaving Friday. But again, slave labor is worthless. Paradoxically, supremacy is counterproductive, victory is futile. Crusoe thus confronts a choice: does he treat Friday like dirt and get off on his sadistic domination over him, or does he free Friday and in so doing ensure a more prosperous life for *himself*?

The institution of slavery in a slightly longer run is not in the

interest of the slave owners. (The only special interest group benefited by the maintenance of slavery is the slave *hunters*.) We can see that the more Crusoe in the state of nature "ignores" Friday, the more he is free from weird perverse hang-ups and designs on Friday (such as to murder him or humiliate him or weaken him), the more indeed he simply focuses on his own material welfare, the more justly he will then be prompted by human nature to handle Friday. The choice to crush and abuse Friday one way or another is evidence of spiritual malaise; the choice to use Friday according to the teachings of economics and other sciences reveals that Crusoe's nature is pure and unmarred by any filthy kinks. The ultimate capitalistic society of equals before the law, of absolute property rights of a man over his body and the external things he has justly appropriated or obtained through peaceful production and exchange, of maximal dignity of human nature, will yield the greatest narrow happiness for all and for each.

It is man's nature to love and endeavor to preserve and strengthen his life, to seek comfort by exploiting physical goods and other external means. Crusoe's fixation on Friday would divert him from his rightly understood ends, from his "business success." By hating Friday, Crusoe demonstrates that he *hates himself*, and if anything is unnatural and so against natural law, *self*-hatred surely is that. Natural morality and natural law therefore involve the intellect purifying the will of violent hatred. It suppresses, often through prodigious effort and painful self-abnegation and penance, existing vicious desires, substituting at first a kind of disinterestedness, nonaggression, abstinence from vengeance, and willingness to cooperate within (capitalistic) social bonds for mutual benefit. Therefore, morality motivates not through a desire but through a purely intellectual cognition of one's duty which commands that certain desires be *purged* from the soul. For any Crusoe, his normal desires are meant to be fulfilled, but his wicked desires are meant to be extinguished precisely for Crusoe's own good.

One must then choose between these conflicting emotions in his heart. This proves that *one* of these desires must be stifled. But which one? It may be that Crusoe hates Friday more than he loves himself. Perhaps Crusoe envies Friday for some excellence of his, which means that he is willing to suffer to make Friday suffer even more. He is willing to sacrifice his own welfare just in order to break or degrade Friday. Something fully external to Crusoe, which might be expected to be of no concern to him (and which under spiritual purity would in fact be viewed as a premium labor factor of production), is instead evaluated as evil and a source of sorrow. Why should Friday elicit hateful feelings from Crusoe? How is he an irritant to Crusoe? Envy of course is a mortal sin, but it may be that the reason for Crusoe's hatred of Friday is that

Crusoe is insane. He does not understand his own nature. That, too, is a perfectly efficacious way of corrupting this nature. By neglecting his own prosperity whether from evil will or madness, Crusoe may be said to be "irrational." Man seeks his happiness by his very essence, yet Crusoe all but condemned himself to hell, and to that extent he can no longer be considered fully human.

Crusoe's desire to torment Friday is not irrational in the same sense in which rejecting modus ponens is irrational. The irrationality is practical. If Crusoe were to agree with the thesis I am defending yet still favored living dangerously, my reply would be: "I predict that the punishment you are bringing upon yourself – and your failure at life is indeed its own punishment – will be more than you are willing to bear." Crusoe's very survival then requires him to reform and abide by justice. Call such "pro-capitalistic mentality" of Crusoe, *moral* rationality. Mises summarized classical liberalism thus: "It seeks to give men only one thing, the peaceful, undisturbed development of material well-being for all, in order thereby to shield them from the external causes of pain and suffering as far as it lies within the power of social institutions to do so at all. To diminish suffering, to increase happiness: that is its aim."[12] Crusoe, presumably, wants to suffer less and be happy more. But in order to procure this condition for himself, he is forced by the nature of man to grant the same condition, and extend the same rights he favors, to all other members of society. I cannot prove apodictically that Crusoe *must* choose peaceful cooperation over the frenzy of sadism any more than I can prove that he *must* choose pursuit of happiness over self-destruction, but I can give him weighty reasons in favor of the former. And if he chooses the latter, then let him die and be forgotten.

With respect to our island we can truly say: "It is wrong for Crusoe to kill Friday." This law, however, is categorical *vacuously* because it is contrary to Crusoe's interests to kill Friday. There is no "Crusoe must respect Friday's rights even if he does not feel like it," because he will *always* and *most pointedly* feel like it, unless he's simply horribly mistaken regarding the means to his own ends. The command of the moral precept and the recommendation of the prudential counsel coincide. In Mises' words, "every step by which an individual substitutes concerted action for isolated action results in an immediate and recognizable improvement in his conditions."[13] That includes the very *first* step of Crusoe deciding not to kill Friday upon meeting him.

It may be true in a real sense that it is natural for "man" to acquire goods by production and voluntary exchange and unnatural to parasitically expropriate goods by force from producers, to pillage and plunder. It is a puissant intuition indeed. Whatever the case, however, it is perfectly natural for "*a* man" both to produce and to prey on producers, insofar as both courses of action can under various conditions

yield riches for him. It seems just as natural to pick apples from one's own orchard as to pilfer them from the neighbor's. Is it so obvious that a parasite, such as a welfare bum or merchant whom the government shelters from competition, is a defective human being? Certainly such a person preys on his own kind which justly inspires revulsion in the non-psychopathic part of humanity. But perhaps it's part of the natural order of things precisely that some prey and others are preyed on. Perhaps it's even "inevitable" as there will be an equilibrium, as if in a biological ecosystem, between the predators and the prey, looters and looted. Maybe the parasites exhibit some possibly aristocratic qualities that make them worthy of certain privileges. Productiveness can be universal since producers positively benefit from the absence of parasites, and parasitism cannot since parasites need the hosts. But I wouldn't hang ethics on the universalization principle alone. Rothbard reaches his libertarian conclusions in *Ethics of Liberty* by elaborating the logic of ownership which is already an abstraction, whereas I am working on the nitty-gritty fundamentals of human actions. Nevertheless, at this point we can establish that at least in our two-man economy it makes no sense for Crusoe to exploit Friday on terms we would consider unjust, to be a parasite.

Now the moral relativist Gilbert Harman sets up the case of

> a contented employee of Murder, Incorporated [who] was raised as a child to honor and respect members of the "family" but to have nothing but contempt for the rest of society. His current assignment, let us suppose, is to kill a certain bank manager, Bernard J. Ortcutt. Since Ortcutt is not a member of the "family," the employee in question has no compunction about carrying out his assignment. In particular, if we were to try to convince him that he should not kill Ortcutt, our argument would merely amuse him. We would not provide him with the slightest reason to desist unless we were to point to practical difficulties, such as the likelihood of his getting caught.
>
> Now, in this case it would be a misuse of language to say of him that he ought not to kill Ortcutt or that it would be wrong of him to do so, since that would imply that our, own moral considerations carry some weight with him, which they do not.[14]

Call the killer Smith. We may note in the first place that Smith has built his loyalty to the "family" on the foundation of sand. He's a ticking time bomb. He'll turn on them unpredictably and psychotically at the first sign of trouble; what's more, he himself will be nonchalantly betrayed by the "family" if the cops turn up the heat or if it is felt that he has outlived his usefulness. As Scanlon points out, "There would… be something unnerving about a 'friend' who would steal a kidney for you

if you needed one. This is… because of what it implies about the 'friend's' view of your right to your own body parts: he wouldn't steal them, but that is only because he happens to like you."[15] Second, no genuine charity can coexist with injustice, indeed charity as a theological virtue is lost with a single mortal sin, and Smith indulges in such sins freely. So Smith is cut off from society, he is an enemy of all but his family. The higher one's grade of the relation with others, the more happiness he garners from association with them. By cultivating the lowest hostility, Smith is not doing himself any favors. Third, Smith feels "contempt" for others, and I grant that *given* this attitude, it may make sense for him to kill Ortcutt. But it is precisely this feeling that he is morally obligated to change. He is to "circumcise his heart." If, however, Smith is truly impervious to reason, what follows is not relativism, or the inappropriateness of our saying that he ought not to kill, but the fact that he is (to an extent) mad, indeed "someone to be hunted down by the police."

Harman defends a version of metaethical subjectivism by appealing to some sort of "implicit agreements" between all members of a community. Whatever's agreed to is by that very fact moral. This agreement is strangely ephemeral: "there is an agreement in the relevant sense when each of a number of people has an intention on the assumption that others have the same intention."[16] It is unclear on this formulation why changing my "intentions" so that they no longer dovetail with other people's intentions is nefarious. We'll deal with subjectivism later. Now it's true that any group of people who are actively cooperating with each other and have an economy, as opposed to starving to death or having already died out, are interacting via well-understood *rules*. But these rules, as I have tried to demonstrate, are not arbitrary agreements. We are not talking about a suicide pact of the sort "If you eat this poisonous mushroom, then I'll jump off a cliff." There are objectively successful ways of cooperating, and there are unsuccessful ways. The objectivity of human constitution makes it true that, in Mises' words, "one must study the laws of human action and social cooperation as the physicist studies the laws of nature."[17] (He means not "by the same methods," but with the same diligence.)

"Morality is itself the result of a kind of bargaining," says Harman, like "over the price of a rug at a garage sale."[18] This opinion is unbecoming a philosopher, so silly it is. Bargaining over a rug already presupposes the property rights of one person over the rug and of the other over the money, the permissibility of a mutually beneficial exchange, and the wrongfulness of extortion or theft of the rug, all moral matters. "Bargaining" presumes, for example, that the other guy will deign to talk to you in the first place rather than club you over the head and take your money. There is an aspect of conventionalism to

morality in the sense that the absolutely true morality is unlikely to be actual morality unless apprehended by reason. Thus, people who are unaware of the advantages of capitalism might not end up cooperating according to its principles. But this hardly impugns absolutism. Every convention that fails to be grounded in natural law is by that fact objectively vicious.

Wong (1984) argues that "moral rules arise from the need to regulate interpersonal conflicts of interest." He is a moral relativist because he thinks there is a medley of equally legitimate "adequate moral systems" that serve that purpose. His relativism need not detain us, but his definition of morality is far too broad. It does not, for example, exclude even murder as immoral. To imitate Stalin, when there is a man, there is an interpersonal conflict of interest; when there is no man, there is no interpersonal conflict of interest. All four of our relations, including hostility, therefore have the power one way or another to regulate conflicts. I submit rather that morality seeks to elucidate the various human relations and to promote the metaphysically highest relation possible in any given situation.

If we call the choice of one of these four systems – "self-sufficient" autarky, communism, feudalism, and capitalism – an ideology, then ideology is prior to ethics. People living in a feudal society have not yet discovered, or perhaps invented, capitalism. Their ethics therefore is more primitive than ours but is no less valid for all that. They are doing the best with what they are given. When a feudal lord says that he bestows his grace upon a vassal who then owes him personal fealty, or that he is the shepherd whom God has appointed to watch over his peasants, he is being entirely honest. Under feudal relations, the ideas of self-ownership, contractual dealings, and mutual consent are not entertained. Likewise, if our society allowed slavery, then it would enjoin the philosophers to develop the corresponding ethics. How shall the master and slave be justified in their intercourse with each other? They might speculate that it is permissible to whip a slave who shirks; on the other hand, that it is wrong to break up families by selling the husband to one buyer and the wife to another; or something like that. We don't bother enunciating such ethics because de jure slavery is not recognized as a valid human relation, and we have far outgrown the antiquated de facto tribal equality. Instead of the *relation* of slavery, we have a *crime* of kidnapping. Thus, if we like capitalism (as we should), then we reject slave-owning and feudal ethics because we reject the parallel ideologies.

The ultraviolence recorded in the various books of the Old Testament, for example, is due to the fact that the economic system of the time was semi-autarkic and semi-slave, not by any human design but simply as a natural economic stage. The tribes in the ancient Middle

East did not engage in social cooperation, they did not depend on each other economically. As a result, one tribe's loss was another tribe's gain. The Israelites had nothing to lose and a few things to gain from the destruction of their fellow men. Such incentives ensured that wars would be constant and savage. The primitive ideology held by those people spawned a primitive ethics that shocks our modern sensibilities, used as we are to global more or less free markets and free trade in which each individual and business firm fills a niche in which they are uniquely useful to society. Here is how Mises describes the intellectual precursors to the Industrial Revolution:

> The economists exploded the old tenets: that it is unfair and unjust to outdo a competitor by producing better and cheaper goods;
>
> that it is iniquitous to deviate from the traditional methods of production;
>
> that machines are an evil because they bring about unemployment;
>
> that it is one of the tasks of civil government to prevent efficient businessmen from getting rich and to protect the less efficient against the competition of the more efficient;
>
> that to restrict the freedom of entrepreneurs by government compulsion or by coercion on the part of other social powers is an appropriate means to promote a nation's well-being.[19]

Upon this revolution, general morality, too, changed. Moral progress, when it occurs, affects the life of an individual who, with time, grows wiser. For society as a whole, instead of moral progress, there is rather ideological progress:

> Compare the results achieved by these "shopkeepers' ethics" with the achievements of Christianity! Christianity has acquiesced in slavery and polygamy, has practically canonized war, has, in the name of the Lord, burnt heretics and devastated countries. The much abused "shopkeepers" have abolished slavery and serfdom, made woman the companion of man with equal rights, proclaimed equality before the law and the freedom of thought and opinion, declared war on war, abolished torture, and mitigated the cruelty of punishment. What cultural force can boast of similar achievements?[20]

Christianity as grace builds on the nature of man, perfecting that nature, but even the grace of ages past pales in comparison with the nature of the capitalistic present. Christianity did well with what it was given; it's just that it was given little before modernity. In other words, the reason why in the past men inflicted unspeakable horrors on each other was

not because the Holy Spirit's grace was inadequate in and of itself but because this grace had weak, even utterly unreceptive, foundations. The atrocities continue even today because laissez-faire capitalism is still an unknown ideal. Let capitalism, the loftiest form of human economic cooperation, be fully embraced by the great majority in every nation, and the world will enjoy uninterrupted peace and daily improvements in prosperity the likes of which have never been imagined in all of history, let alone seen. It is only then that God's ultimate project of uniting Himself and all rational creatures into one communion of hearts through charity can truly take off.

The link between charity and the four natural relations is that greater charity can be raised on a more eminent relation than on a more primitive one. The most profound complementarities are found in the family and capitalism which are the foremost natural foundations for divine grace and salvation of the soul. (They are of course different: husband and wife and not just capitalistic adults exchanging bodily fluids.) These represent the smallest association, the family with its conjugal love, and the largest, the market with its entrepreneurial love. Both need to remain purified and stable. In between is a host of intermediate associations which are important but not as much as the endpoints. There is the further division *within* the market: long-term economic progress and short-term charitable almsgiving generalized into Christian works of mercy.

Note that we are deriving ethics from the understanding of social cooperation under *normal* conditions. We assume, for example, that the world is generally marked by moderate scarcity rather than either overabundance or extreme dearth, since neither the Garden of Eden nor an empty wasteland will serve up the right incentives for the market process. Natural law is the same across all possible worlds in which social cooperation, such as under division of labor and entrepreneurial freedom, benefits all individuals.

Attila the Hun who idolizes domination and cruelty can now be told, "You are a product of a primitive age, rude economy, and backward ideology. As a result, you are not fully rational." Again, it was the economists, Mises points out, who "reduced the prestige of conquerors and expropriators and demonstrated the social benefits derived from business activity. None of the great modern inventions would have been put to use if the mentality of the precapitalistic era had not been thoroughly demolished by the economists."[21] The ideas adopted by the people and the level of economic development interact with each other, such that in the fullness of time, the previous economic stage is transcended, and the next stage emerges from it, ideally without any violent revolutions. These relations and economic systems are 4 in number, exactly. For example, socialism is not the 5th system, nor

paradisial communism the 6th, supposedly advances over capitalism. Instead, they are either fantasies or perversions.

In light of all this, what is the connection between, for example, a non-moral emotion of delight at another's pain and the moral evil of this emotion? I submit that it is deductive a priori, with the following proof:

1. If Crusoe rejoices over Friday's misfortune, then he wills evil to him.
2. If he wills evil to him, then he hates him.
3. If he hates him, then he stands ready to harm him at any opportunity.
4. But harming Friday also harms Friday's productivity and thus injures Crusoe himself.
5. If Crusoe is so perverse as to countenance self-harm, then Crusoe hates himself.
6. But it is irrational to hate oneself.
7. Therefore, it makes every sense for Crusoe to repress his hatred for Friday.
8. Hatred means that the relation between Crusoe and Friday is hostility; disinterestedness or charity means that it is complementarity.
9. Crusoe in this situation can to an extent control his own feelings.
10. Given the possibility of a higher-tier relation (which as we have seen is not always the case), lower-tier relations are metaphysically evil.
11. Therefore, Crusoe's schadenfreude is morally wrong.

Natural *rights* then are those rights of other men which the natural law bids one to respect. The law enjoins Crusoe not to murder, enslave, or tax Friday, again for the sake of Crusoe's own rightly understood interests. By that fact Friday and by extension all members of society acquire a set of natural rights not to be murdered, enslaved, or taxed by any man. And even if some Jones enters the picture and anoints himself king over the island, he cannot enslave or tax Crusoe and Friday either, for such laws would be against nature. Even the king must "live off his own" rather than be a tax-parasite. Again, Crusoe cannot both value Friday for rendering useful services to him and hate him and seek his demise. He can't satisfy both desires on the one hand to maintain Friday in good condition and on the other to ruin him. Natural *law* teaches Crusoe that he can prosper only if he treats Friday justly, which by itself endows Friday with natural *rights* it would make no sense for Crusoe to violate; as a corollary then, Crusoe has *duties* to Friday (and not just prudential reasons for himself) not to violate these natural rights. And Crusoe's duties would include not only abstaining

from harming Friday but also extinguishing any wicked urges to harm him that might visit him.

What could be less controversial than the idea that nature obeys laws? Fish swim, birds fly, water is wet, and salt is NaCl. Yet here we have Frank Knight, the founder of the Chicago school of economics, saying: "Natural law has served as a defense for any existing order against any change and as an argument for change in any direction."[22] Perhaps the puzzle of natural law can be spelled out as follows. We have seen that the Aristotelian efficient cause of *X* is the answer to the question, "How does *X* work?" The material and efficient causes operate on both the physical and spiritual levels. For example, perhaps the soul is composed of the chakras, and works according to the virtues (such as prudence for the blue chakra). But man also has his final cause, which queries "what man is for," inside him. And because spirit is above matter, man does not "work" like a machine; he is free to choose. Therefore, it would seem that man is not subject to the natural law to which tables and chairs are subject. And yet the human pursuit of happiness is not a chaotic free-for-all. There are laws of teleological causation no less than of physical causation. These are what economics and ethics study. Therefore, there is no problem with the notion that human beings, too, are lawbound or that this law begets natural rights and duties. The stumbling block is that discovering this law and the corresponding duties is exceedingly nontrivial, and even the most eminent scholars have made terrible and deadly mistakes. Knight goes on: "One of the most important attributes of man as a species is the extraordinary range of difference between different individuals as to personality and culture."[23] But the moral law does not ignore, much less suppresses, these differences. It is a humble master, prohibiting very little and permitting a great deal. It bids us to shun only the *inhuman*, while celebrating our legitimate diversity.

Natural morality then has a very undemanding content, though its scope is unlimited.[24] That is no danger, however, since so few things are forbidden, and most things we do in our daily lives are so *obviously* permissible (like eating a sandwich) that we do not need to deliberate morally on them. Suppose further that a man has a choice between costlessly for himself saving either his wife or five strangers. Natural morality does not require one to save anyone, so if he elects to save his wife, that is an "economic" non-moral subjective preference for him. Christian morality does require one to do good to others, but it is not utilitarian which would entail extreme demandingness. Whatever works of mercy one does depend upon one's own calculations and the perception of God's will. One *may* be on the hook to save *someone* in this scenario (by divine grace though not by law in the sense that he would not be able to look God in the eye if he refused to save anyone), but

there is no reason at all why he cannot choose to save his wife. Permissibility then is not part of the motivation but precisely absence of motivation, of the pull of duty. If a man is in a situation where his wife is in danger (such that he is not in any dilemma), he may be bound by a special obligation to save her. But wouldn't reflecting on this duty be "one thought too many" for him?[25] Not really, because the duty extends not just to the act of saving her but also to *wanting* to save her. If he does not want to save her, the duty is operative and at least he'll behave decently; if he does want to save her, the duty, having been fulfilled, does not need to be dwelled on. We'll discuss this in more detail in Chapter 3.

This understanding also reveals the blasphemous absurdity of the divine command theory of ethics. For the Creator God interacts with His creatures not directly but through the intermediary of nature and its law. God is the Author of nature which then acts according to the way it was made. What generates duties for us is human nature's secondary causes, not God; though God, we can admit, did create nature as first cause. "God created man in the beginning and left him in command of his own counsel."[26] Man must think his way through every problem, including ethics. If God were to start barking orders at him (enforcing them perhaps with threats of hellfire?), man would be freed from the necessity to think for himself. He'd become as if an inanimate body, determined to a single path in life, except the path would be determined not by its own nature (as billiard balls are determined according to their nature) but by divine will. This would have two clear effects. First, human nature as a rational and thinking animal which is God's own handiwork would be destroyed; second, even if man somehow became "ethically good" as a result, he would be good not by his own (newly irrational) nature but by divine nature. St. Thomas, for example, denies that: when asking, "Are all things good by the divine goodness?" he replies, "Nevertheless, everything is called good by reason of the similitude of the divine goodness belonging to it, which is formally its own goodness, whereby it is denominated good."[27] This would neatly refute the theory itself by making humans quite literally parts of God and so affirm panentheism, when classical theism seems presupposed by it.

There is of course the conundrum of the divine nature itself. God has to differ relevantly from Stalin so that Stalin's command theory of ethics would be false, but God's would be true. If God is good on the 3rd level, in the uniquely divine way or the way nothing else is good, then an element of this goodness would seem to be not desecrating the natures of the very things God Himself creates, as His goodness self-diffuses into being. *God's nature is such that He cannot issue any commands* to His creatures contrary to those already entailed by their

natures. God *can* command men in the order of grace, but grace is precisely not law and above law; grace does not violate nature but improves on it. Moreover, the principles of Christian justice, i.e., the consequences of "love God and neighbor," can be worked out somewhat rigorously, as well. Hence, the divine command theory, insofar as it would clearly violate human nature, is false. We can put it this way: anything that presumes to promulgate commands antithetical to the independently understood natural law is not God. Why, for example, should I *obey* any divine command? If because of a promise of some reward, then this is not a moral command but a sort of divine incentive. If obeying it will make me miserable and refusing to obey will make me happy, why heed God at all? And if God threatens me with punishment for resisting an apparently wicked command, then this is sufficient evidence that I'm being deceived by a mere demon. There is never either abrogation of natural law or dispensation from it. It is futile to pray to God to permit one to do evil.

A solution to the Euthyphro dilemma follows logically. Asked Socrates: Is the pious loved by the gods because it is pious, or is it pious because it is loved by the gods? It would seem that if the first horn is taken, then God's nature is unbecomingly limited by an objective creaturely fact: even God is "forced" to recognize piety as good. And if the second horn is picked, then piety may be whatever God might on a whim proclaim: if God were to declare that He loved murder, then murder would by that fact become a holy act. However, given that nature is interspersed between God and men, if piety is strict fulfillment of natural duties, then God loves pious men precisely for their piety, but the natural law to which pious men adhere is what it is because it was loved by God when God was authoring nature. If God had wanted us to fly, He would have given us wings, in which case what is pious might have been different; but given our nature, God loves it when we are true to it. There is no paradox, because the "love" in the horns of the dilemma extends to different things: God loved *human nature* and, by creating it, determined the content of pious actions; but He now loves an *individual* for his piety or spiritual purity. God "subjectively" loved piety and made human nature in such a way that piety (as justice, for example) would be a human virtue, but he loves pious men because they are "objectively" virtuous, as in true to their uncorrupt nature.

I do not of course claim that natural law itself is arbitrary; in choosing how to make rational creatures who are *like* God, God might have faced significant limitations on His power. It stands to reason that humans *had* to have prudence and knowledge and be able to interact with the physical world efficiently. The universe has to "work" on every level and not fall apart. But there was probably considerable leeway as to the details of this "best possible world" which would then have

depended on God's positive will.

Is it true therefore that "if there is no God, then everything is permitted"? On the one hand, no, for even if God, per impossibile, were to vanish, His law would remain and continue to prohibit certain things. On the other hand, maybe, insofar as the following sentiments would be true in the absence of God: "You are a puff of smoke that appears briefly and then disappears." "Man goes about as a mere phantom; they hurry about, although in vain; he heaps up stores without knowing for whom."[28]

Now all human beings share the same nature and reason but not the same grace. Therefore, "I ought not to kill" is true for all men. Hence ethics is absolute. And the proof of this proposition compels assent in all, even in atheists. Hence ethics is objective. Now even existence of God can be rigorously proven by natural reason without appeal to revelation, and atheists are mistaken in their doctrine, or so I think. But at least we can discuss this matter on a level playing field. At the same time if God sanctifies me by saying, "Travel to India and convert the Hindus to Christianity," this command is unique to me. It does not mean that other people, too, ought to imitate me and go to India. Thus, faith that sits atop natural knowledge, too, is an aspect of grace which is unequal for Christians and is altogether lacking for non-Christians. People are equal before the law; they are completely unequal before grace. Arguments from faith might work for other Christians, but they cannot generate common consent in a "pluralistic society." This is despite the fact that the articles of Christian faith may be *true*.

Human rights do not arise out of any sanctity of human life, for that is a Christian concept. It may well be that in the order of grace, life is to be revered, and aggression against it is sacrilege. Divine grace and the charity God's radiance implants into the soul uplift man into likeness of God. That is a huge deal, and it exalts one enormously. For remember how John the Baptist upbraided the Pharisees: "And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones."[29] Natural unregenerate humans are a dime a dozen to God. But to derive rights, it is sufficient to meditate on the conditions of human mutual usefulness within the economy in the order of pure nature. Mises argues that "feelings of sympathy and friendship… are the source of man's most delightful and most sublime experiences. They are the most precious adornment of life; they lift the animal species man to the heights of a really human existence. However, they are not… the agents that have brought about social relationships. They are fruits of social cooperation, they thrive only within its frame…" He goes on to explain that the natural basis for cooperation is "the facts that work performed under the division of labor is more productive than isolated work and that man's

reason is capable of recognizing this truth. But for these facts men would have forever remained deadly foes of one another, irreconcilable rivals in their endeavors to secure a portion of the scarce supply of means of sustenance provided by nature. Each man would have been forced to view all other men as his enemies; his craving for the satisfaction of his own appetites would have brought him into an implacable conflict with all his neighbors. No sympathy could possibly develop under such a state of affairs."[30] Nevertheless, not violating another's natural rights is a form of respect for him as a human being. There is an aspect of him that is inviolable and protected, even indeed sacred in the sense of "set apart" from all other creatures. It is therefore permissible to legislate the natural morality of *law* though not the unique Christian duties to God obtained by *grace*.

Natural law is purely descriptive for all beings other than man, saying how things *are*. Now the law, being the efficient cause of the universe as a whole and part of its formal cause, *informs* the universe, suffuses it with information. An apple feels compelled to fall toward earth; it knows what it is doing extremely well. When apprehended by reason, the law is a human abstraction, describing the actual behavior of things. But for man natural law is also prescriptive, saying how things *ought to be*, for four reasons.

First, unlike an irrational animal, man is not equipped with instinct to satisfy his limited cravings reliably, indeed man wants *everything*, and ferreting out the *means* to his ends is hard work, carried out through everlasting progress over generations. Humans can and do make mistakes that brute beasts need not make. We need not announce solemnly that man *ought to* seek true happiness any more than we need to encourage fish to swim or birds to fly. Or rather man seeks the first end of nature, the second end of virtue, and the last end of narrow happiness, with the chief problem of ethics being that the three ends can come into an at least apparent and sometimes real conflict. The three goods – metaphysical, moral, and physical – are separable both in the intellect and in the life of an individual. Each can be had without the others. But unless all three are present, true happiness will elude one. Nevertheless, simple lamentable but often excusable ignorance of natural law can cause a man to slip up or behave viciously, to fail to get closer to any of the three ends just listed. The discovery of capitalism and the development of economic science are recent phenomena; most of the convulsions and miseries of the world have been due to human actions that were performed with complete disregard for both.

Second, man's nature, unlike that of vegetables, animals, minerals, and angels, is uniquely corrupt owing to a certain natural instability of the mixture of rational soul and matter. It is easy for a man purposely to wreck his own felicity in an immense variety of creative

ways. The story of the angelic fall goes something like this. The angels in heaven were graced with charity for humans. But grace comes with servitude, and many angels refused the grace because they despised mankind for its (future) sins. They, noble and pure creatures, would not stoop so low as to minister to the pathetic humans. The ensuing war sundered the angelic host into good angels and demons. We suffer contempt whenever we defile ourselves by violating the natural law.

Looking at the history of wars, it might indeed seem that men are little more than a mighty force of destruction. What value are we then adding to creation? Nature has plenty of its own destructive forces: earthquakes, tornadoes, locusts, disease. For example, in their pursuit of happiness, humans put a definite amount of stress on irrational animals, both wild and domesticated. If we were men, then that fact might be irrelevant or justifiable. But if we are like forest wildfire instead, aren't we an evil phenomenon? Animals who have souls are superior to wildfires – and hence humans – which do not. Wouldn't it be good and even morally required for mankind to disappear? If we remain human, then perhaps in a hundred years we'll learn how to safely dissipate tornadoes, very much to our glory. But if we are *the tornadoes ourselves*, this time to our shame, isn't it we who should be dissipated? The animals will benefit; nothing specifically human will be lost; and perhaps in another hundred million years something better than our miserable species will "evolve." This sad conclusion is the fruit of lawlessness.

Third, the human body is fragile and prone both to sickness and pain and to addiction to pleasure. The body has a devious mind of its own and impinges greatly on the soul. Bodily defects can debilitate the soul and cause man to stumble in his life. A solid stone does not become any worse for having been smashed with a hammer. A human skull does. This is another way in which human nature falls short of what it ought to be.

The fourth, final, and most important reason is that while natural law is generally self-enforcing, the law for *human* beings is not. As we have seen, a billiard ball fears the natural law so much that it always listens to the call of its nature. Precisely because it obeys the law with perfect fidelity, it is granted a certain immortality, as per the law of conservation of matter and energy. As we have seen, in a small society (SS), Crusoe's narrow self-interest is served directly and immediately when he treats Friday according to capitalistic justice; injustice penalizes itself. But things do not work this way in a *large* society (LS), featuring social cooperation between numerous individuals. Consider one of the two major problems with socialism as an economic system: that of incentives. Some authors have contended that a worker will have reason to exert himself to the utmost under socialism, because his labor

benefits not his employer but society as a whole of which he is a part.

The problem with this argument is that the worker bears the full costs of laboring but his contribution to the social product is miniscule on the whole. Mises phrases it thus: "While the individual worker enjoys completely the pleasures he may reap by yielding to the temptation to carelessness and laziness, the resulting impairment of the social dividend curtails his own share only infinitesimally. Under such a socialist mode of production all personal incentives which selfishness provides under capitalism are removed, and a premium is put upon laziness and negligence."[31] In order to get a worker to perform, the socialist government would have to enslave him and substitute fear of punishment for the incentives of self-interest. The system would begin to resemble "they pretend to pay us, and we pretend to work."

But the same unimpeachable reasoning applies in evaluating the alleged "identification of the interests" of each *criminal* and those of the whole society. It may be that a criminal harms society. But in a large economy the harm to the *criminal* from the lessened efficiency of social cooperation due to the criminal's own damage to it is "infinitesimal," while the criminal may luxuriate in his vast ill-gotten riches. When prudently executed, crime can pay very well, quite despite the fact that society as a whole grows poorer. Therefore, it cannot be called a priori, that is, simply from considerations of economic theory, imprudent. Mises advises: "Man cannot have both the advantages derived from peaceful cooperation under the principle of the division of labor within society and the license of embarking upon conduct that is bound to disintegrate society."[32] "Man" indeed cannot, but "a man" certainly can; in fact, there are individual men right now plotting to have their cakes and eat them, too, in these very senses. He goes on: "For what the individual must sacrifice for the sake of society he is amply compensated by greater advantages. His sacrifice is only apparent and temporary; he forgoes a smaller gain in order to reap a greater one later."[33] "If and as far as labor under the division of labor is more productive than isolated labor, and if and as far as man is able to realize this fact, human action itself tends toward cooperation and association; man becomes a social being not in sacrificing his own concerns for the sake of a mythical Moloch, society, but in aiming at an improvement in his own welfare."[34] When Mises talks like this, it is obvious that he has in mind the *species* man collectively contemplating the choice between a war of all against all and laissez-faire capitalism, not an individual person mulling over the choice between just and unjust conduct irrespective of the overall social system of which he is a part. But ethics concerns itself precisely with the latter. Mises then considers criminals to be mentally ill or irrational. But I disagree with such an undiscriminating verdict: many malefactors are quite rational, respond

to incentives, and pick their dirty work because it promises to them to be most financially rewarding. They enter the life of crime because they are good at it and can profit from this activity more than from any other. (Mises himself was an amoralist like J.L. Mackie whose "error theory" of ethics we'll discuss in Chapter 7, and this was his rather inadequate attempt to subsume ethics into economics.) The entity that *in fact* makes unjust actions imprudent in LS is the state. If it is efficient at detecting and prosecuting violent crimes, then it will indeed make crime narrowly unprofitable for the great majority of people. We may therefore retain the proof of the immorality of murder and so on for LS but replace Crusoe's self-hatred from the pain he inflicts on himself from his ill-treatment of Friday with the similar self-hatred because one has brought the wrath of the authorities and punishment upon his person. In SS, the forces that caution against injustice are natural; in LS, they are man-made, consisting of the actions of the institution of the state.

In SS, Crusoe benefits from cooperation both in the short term and in the long term; in LS, a competent criminal can benefit from noncooperation likewise both in the short term and in the long term. The distinction as regards time horizons rather applies to something else: everyone's interests in a smoothly functioning market economy and in the maintenance of free competition are harmonious in the long term, even though a particular Smith might find it tiresome to compete with a particular Jones in the short term. Even if Smith might wish in his heart that Jones would drop dead, he cannot endorse the abolition of capitalism as such.

In SS then, such as one that consists of just Crusoe and Friday under normal conditions, Crusoe's every act to benefit from collaborating with Friday will *also* happen to be just according to the laws of LS. For example, if Crusoe and Friday divide their labor such that Friday specializes in catching fish and Crusoe, in gathering berries, then as far as Crusoe is concerned, Friday for him is (admittedly somewhat autistically) a remarkable if mysterious machine, Frido-Matic 9000, that efficiently converts berries into fish. It would be foolish for Crusoe to try to break FM-9000 and grab the few fishes inside without depositing the requisite number of berries. He won't find any more in there the next day, and the machine may up and zap him with an electric bolt while he sleeps. The fact that Crusoe must respect the FM-9000's manual of operation is just a fact of nature. Call this fact "natural law" and the fishes that appear in the machine every day for use by Crusoe, Friday's "property." Justice is easier to achieve between equals in coercive power in which case Crusoe and Friday may have a modus vivendi that defaults to a complementary relation. But capitalism wins the day even if there is an inequality in power and even if Crusoe can get away with any roguery. It is not true, as per Thucydides, that

"the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must." As society grows to encompass into the economy more and more people, it becomes large, and foul play may become profitable. The harm to society as a whole from an individual unjust act is negligible, yet it benefits the scoundrel considerably. Thus, we need the institutions of justice in LS to threaten punishment to lawbreakers in whose place in SS mere self-interest sufficed.

In other words, our proofs of basic morality may encounter the objection that they fail in LS, such as from Rothbard:

> Let us… assume… that the great majority of a society hate and revile redheads. Let us further assume that there are very few redheads in the society. This large majority then decides that it would like very much to murder all redheads.
>
> Here they are; the murder of redheads is high on the value-scales of the great majority of the public; there are few redheads so that there will be little loss in production on the market.[35]

Why ought the majority not to indulge in the murder if murder in this scenario seems to be in their interest? We may certainly appeal to some longer-run consequences of a general rule that sanctions genocide at the pleasure of the majority, such as that casual destructionism of the sort will likely disintegrate society. It is impossible to build a thriving civilization in the first place when multiple ethnic or religious (or hair-colored) groups are itching to annihilate each other. If that comes off as inadequate, I must fall back on the reply that the state will not allow it – however lame it seems because it will very likely be precisely the state that will carry out the mass murder. Further, as we have seen, it is precisely "hating and reviling" that are wicked and corrupt the soul of the hater. It is these feelings that the law ultimately aims to eliminate. People don't need to love each other to consider each other useful and dear, and hatred wanes through mutually beneficial association. In the U.S., the various "diverse" quarrel endlessly, but capitalism manages to keep the peace. E.g., Mises points out:

> Many decades of intensive anti-Semitic propaganda did not succeed in preventing German "Aryans" from buying in shops owned by Jews, from consulting Jewish doctors and lawyers, and from reading books by Jewish authors. They did not patronize the Jews unawares – "Aryan" competitors were careful to tell them again and again that these people were Jews. Whoever wanted to get rid of his Jewish competitors could not rely on an alleged hatred of Jews; he was under the necessity of asking for legal discrimination against them.[36]

As long as an Englishman grants a German the right to exist because the

Englishman likes the kind of beer the German makes, his animus of the German is superficial and ephemeral. Even in LS, then, the majority's murder of the redheads is an act of perverse *self*-hatred.

A man who chooses between committing murder and moral behavior does not choose between two equally reasonable occupations or avocations; he chooses between life as a branch nourishing and being nourished by the vine of society and being cut off from the social body as though a gangrenous foot for the sake of the whole. He chooses between life and the electric chair, and ultimately between heaven and hell. This is not a free choice but a necessity imposed upon us by human nature (and nature's God, though moral realism does not entail theism). The argument works for a string of smaller crimes, as well, and not just for first-degree murder. A judge needs to hit on a deterrent sufficient to persuade a criminal to reconsider his lifestyle. As a result, punishment must be ratcheted up each time the SOB is caught and found guilty. The first time Smith steals a car, he gets probation. The second, 1 year in prison. The third, 5 years. At some point the judge will wonder whether Smith is a mad dog who refuses to heed *any* incentive. In such a case, the judge must protect society from further harm by condemning Smith to death or life imprisonment.

Crusoe's punishment in SS is entirely self-inflicted: by hurting Friday, he hurts himself. We might perhaps define *X* as "wrong" in LS whenever punishment by the justice system for *X* is merited. Now punishment in LS is rather more complicated, being inflicted for a wise combination of four reasons, in the order of decreasing refinement: rehabilitation, retribution, deterrence, and condemnation. For example, a judge, in pronouncing a sentence, can take into account moral reformation. Any repentance must be accompanied by penance. If a person repents of his ways, then a part of the punishment has already been administered internally; for example, the criminal's conscience is tormenting him. Therefore, external punishment, like time in prison, can be reduced. On the other hand, if the criminal glories in his corruption, the external punishment is maximized in order to humble him properly. Consider, for example, whether it ever makes sense to punish a wolf for stealing sheep. Clearly, a wolf cannot be rehabilitated, unless the punishment is part of the process of taming it. Even then, you would teach the wolf to *fear* the master not *love* him, as rehabilitating humans does. It is ordained from above that a wolf shall find sustenance by eating sheep, and there is nothing anyone can do to change that fact of nature. Retribution to the wolf, as if dispensing "justice" to it for having dared to raise its paws against its superior (or something like that), is blasphemy. Other wolves will not come to dread punishment by watching you abuse the guilty wolf, so they cannot be deterred. Nor, finally, can wolves be meaningfully condemned, this being reserved for

human beings who are part of the moral community. One cannot kill a man but only if he turns into a mad dog or wolf, as it were, and then only lawfully by order of a judge, etc. But one can kill a wild wolf for any reason at all or indeed for no reason. Thus, since it can be useful to punish humans but not wolves, we conclude that humans can be morally guilty, while wolves cannot.

Here is another way to think of these, with respect to proportionality. For (1) *rehabilitation*, fully proportionate punishment, i.e., "an eye for an eye," is the upper limit. The idea is to inflict the exact same type of pain on a dull but still basically decent or at least reformable person to cause him to realize exactly how he harmed his victim and be horrified by it. You say, essentially: "You hurt me greatly. But you don't seem to care too much. Let me make you feel to some degree as *you* made *me* feel, and maybe then you'll understand how evil your actions were." Rehabilitation is not "reeducation" or any sort of psychological brainwashing in an insane asylum but rather a refined version of retribution designed to make the offender experience his victim's anguish and feel remorse therefrom. If *less* than proportionate punishment suffices to teach him this lesson by giving him a dose of his own medicine, then rehabilitation, and justice on the whole, is well-served. This type of punishment is an act of *charity* to the offender and an instance of fraternal correction. (2) *Retribution* is an act of fully "deflecting" an unjust attack back onto the criminal. Punishment inflicted for this reason is what the criminal "deserves." The harm to the victim is parried and 100% redirected back onto the lawbreaker in the manner of Newton's third law. The rebel outrageously took it upon himself to privilege himself in the cosmic order of things, to raise himself above the position the rightful governor of the universe has justly allotted him – he brazenly and insolently, the filth, dared to appropriate what does not belong to him, for which intolerable affront the powers that be shall smite him with great scorn to show him his proper place. The decorum is thereby satisfyingly restored. The reaction is opposite and equal to the action; hence a right retribution will observe *perfect* proportionality.[a] Or we can say that order is restored when the criminal forsakes his rights to the exact same extent to which he violated his victim's rights. Did you think it was Ok to steal a car? Then it must be equally Ok for the court to take away yours in punishment. You are "estopped"; your own actions tie your tongue; you become powerless to object.[37] Unlike rehabilitation, there is no need to hurt in the same way, only with the same amount of suffering. This signifies not grace and love but *personal nature*: the criminal is treated according to natural morality but is still regarded as a person with dignity. (3) *Deterrence* is marked by the fact that some criminals will evade detection and punishment. Purely proportionate punishment will

then fail adequately to deter. If 70% of criminals are uncaught, then the punishment to the unlucky 30% must be considerably more severe than a mere eye for an eye in order to create sufficient threat to potential future lawbreakers. Their calculations of the profitability of a crime should deter many of them despite a nonzero chance of getting away with the crime. Thus, punishments to deter will tend to be *more* than proportionate. This bespeaks *impersonal nature*; the criminal's happiness is considered, but for all that he is used as a mere pawn for the sake of a separate social end; the judge sacrifices him in order to strike fear into the hearts of his recalcitrant brethren still contemplating their future misdeeds. Finally, for (4) *condemnation*, the punishment is in a sense *infinite* and observes *no* proportionality at all with the crime. Hell would be the paradigmatic example; but men can create their own hells, too, through sentences of execution or life imprisonment without possibility of parole. It's not even punishment for any specific crime but preemptive social self-defense based upon the judge's belief that the offender is totally depraved and will surely trespass again in the future. He is permanently severed from society and neutralized thereby. This is an act of *hatred* by society toward the recidivist. So, LS is vastly more sophisticated than SS, and this sophistication extends to its theories and practice of punishment. The point, however, is the same.

Game theory suggests that reconciliation between self-interest and justice is possible even in what we may call a medium society (MS) which is just small enough to lend itself to computer modeling with simplifying assumptions. Yeager reports on some experiments by Robert Axelrod:

> "Tit for tat" is the strategy of always cooperating unless the other player has defected on the last move, in which case one retaliates. It proves to be remarkably robust in winning. It conforms to several intuitively plausible precepts.
>
> 1. Don't be envious. Cooperation brings gains; the Prisoners' Dilemma is a positive-sum, not zero-sum, game.
> 2. Don't defect first; be nice.
> 3. Pay back cooperation and also defection. Demonstrate, quickly and emphatically, that you will not be walked over. Don't, however, bear a grudge too long: make it worthwhile for a noncooperator to reform his ways.
> 4. Don't be too clever. You don't want the other player to misinterpret your strategy.
>
> The tit-for-tat strategy, in short, is nice, provocable or retaliatory, forgiving, and clear.[38]

In certain MS populations of Cheats who seek personal advantage even

through acting unjustly and Grudgers who practice tit for tat, it might not always pay to cooperate, but it always pays to *be* a Grudger.

Is a "perfectly unjust" man possible? Plato's Glaucon describes him in great detail. A striking aspect of a such a person is that he is able efficiently to "benefit his friends and injure his enemies."[39] But friendship entails justice at least between friends. But as we have seen, *all* men are friends by nature *at least* insofar as all "human beings are potential collaborators in the struggle for survival because they are capable of recognizing the mutual benefits of cooperation."[40] Hence justice is to reign between all, and *any* injustice is adverse to one's true happiness. Perfect injustice would mean that there are *only* enemies. At best, all others are one's unwitting victims. Hence perfection of injustice is intensely implausible: one will end up victimizing everyone, and those still unhurt are merely awaiting being betrayed by him, even if by stipulation they will still sing praises to him as just. He is an enemy to them, and they are deluded false friends to him. Such a person cuts himself off from mankind. That's not a recipe for happiness. Further, harming others, even if they don't realize it's you who are responsible for it, diminishes their ability to benefit you. If you up and wipe out your entire town, you'll "destroy the economy" and yourself will starve. So, some minimal respect for human nature is required: in fact, a perfectly unjust man would be smart enough to avoid crazy violence and rather, say, install himself as king and tax the economy optimally, while keeping it free from prosperity-reducing government fetters. Even if he can commit any injustice toward anybody with impunity, he will not want to ravage social cooperation as such. For example, as king he will be required to enforce justice between all *other* people, lest society falls apart. He'll want to stay the *only* perfectly unjust man in the whole city; he'll want everyone else to be perfectly just. If perfect injustice is possible and available to all, then a society of perfectly unjust men will instantly self-destruct. They'll devour each other. Further, justice involves harmony such that in human interactions, each person's natural dignity is preserved. As such, it is a foundation for natural friendship and through that, for strength including in self-defense. An individual Orc may be stronger than a Human, but the Orcish Horde as a whole is weakened by the constant infighting and betrayals within it, often allowing the Human Alliance to overpower it. Crank up the injustice to the max, and the Horde is doomed. If perfect injustice is possible but available to one being only, then this person must be near-omnipotent. For example, the chief of the demons, call him by tradition Lucifer, both wants to destroy us and in the meantime be worshipped by us. But Lucifer is not perfectly unjust despite being the most naturally eminent creature ever made, since many of us know very well he is a ruthless enemy. We are not deceived into calling him just. Perfect injustice is in

fact extremely hard for mere mortals; such a thing happens as a matter of course only in imperial politics where a mass murderer can be given a Nobel peace prize.

Richard Joyce doubts some of this reasoning, mentioning Plato's story of Gyges, a shepherd who, upon coming across a ring that bestowed invisibility on its wearer, "seduced the queen, and conspiring with her, slew the king, and took possession of the throne."[41] Joyce comments: "To think that the shepherd, when a self-made king, *must* live a cold, unsatisfying existence, friendless and unloved – with troubled conscience and damaged soul – is at worst simply foolish, and at best requires a leap of optimistic faith that facts about human psychology are a very particular way."[42] In the first place, is it said that friendship doubles joy and halves grief. If one considers the entire mankind to be his friends, even if he is united with it through impartial benevolence or merely by respecting universal human rights, then he is bound to be massively happier than an unjust man, still more than a "perfectly" unjust man like Gyges. The Christian doctrine has it that ultimately in the afterlife there is no such thing as mere natural happiness: all men must make the true and final choice between heaven with its supernatural glory and hell with its endless horror. I think a milder version of this view prevails in this world. Humans cannot control their own evil – if they embrace it even to an extent, they'll almost inevitably go all the way. Gyges is doomed to self-destruct the moment he forms his evil plan.

This is true not only on the individual but on the social level, too. Ponder the idea that we have reached the end of history which will consist in the states of the world practicing sustainably prudent predation (perhaps at the maximum point on the Laffer curve): they will prey on the economy but not go so far as to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs; the parasite will abstain from bleeding the host dry. Though tax serfdom, inflation, wars, interventionism of every kind will continue forevermore, nevertheless the states will allow a small measure of freedom and economic progress. The future is not all gloom and doom. There is a fly in this ointment, however. With that economic progress, the "social" creative power will indeed grow, but so will the parasitic on it and destructive state power. And when this state power reaches sufficient level, it will annihilate all humanity and itself with it. It may happen with a bang, like the new "Space Force" blowing up the planet *Star Wars*-style, or with a whimper as some novel virus that, for example, makes women infertile escapes a government lab where it was being manufactured, but unless the state is abolished, it is inevitable. In the long run, there is no such thing as sustainably prudent predation; if allowed to fester, our corruption will overwhelm us. Political libertarianism can be seen as a matter of sheer survival of our species.

The more each person aspires to benefit from the division of labor, the more people and nations he has to count as his friends, and the less thereby will be the scope of realistic profitable injustice on his part. As the entire world gets enmeshed into free-market economic cooperation and trade, war, too, becomes senseless from the point of view of the immense majority. To the extent that people realize that they would lose greatly from the destruction of their own trading partners, universal peace becomes the order of the day. Even if it may occur to the Ruritanians that they could attack and plunder the nearby Waldavia, the Ruritanians might gain in the short run from the spoils of war (like what? food from the Waldavian grocery stores?), but they would lose in the longer run. The Ruritanian aggression would shut down existing Waldavian production, and the future economic progress that is possible only under stable peace brought about by the Waldavian entrepreneurs for the benefit of all (Ruritanians, Waldavians, and the rest of the world) would fail to take place. Under free trade, Ruritanian consumers benefit from the development of the Waldavian economy as much as they benefit from the development of their own.

Still, far be it from me to deny that prudence and interpersonal justice are separate and distinct virtues. It is of course a crucial purpose of justice to counteract wicked self-interest, about which more will be said later.

The illusive plausibility of moral relativism may lie in the fact that each person most ordinarily is a member of numerous civil associations. Thus, I am a member of my family, I am Catholic, I am a philosopher, I live in Ohio, I like musical theater, and so on. The rules for dealing with fellow members of these communities vary from one to another. I treat my next-door neighbors differently from fellow philosophers. Then people rush to judgment that *all* interhuman law is "just" a convention. In each of these associations, other members are closer to me than complete strangers. But is it really the case that complete strangers have no claim on me at all? A little reflection shows that they do. "You shall not kill" commands each person not to kill precisely strangers. Rules of this sort are known as natural law. Each person is free to mingle with those he likes, to love them more than strangers, and to acquire special rights and duties that go beyond basic justice, but natural law is still no joke, specifying as it does the minimum consideration other people ought to be given. A question can arise whether people can "by convention" agree to renounce some of their natural rights. For example, while normally assault is everywhere prohibited, two boxers can agree to beat each other up in the ring for money to entertain spectators. I think there are some fairly remote possibilities where each member of a community can vote away their natural rights, but usually such arrangements are moral perversions or

mistakes and are to be avoided.

There is a wrinkle in this understanding. We have defined physical good as "what is loved and ought to be" and metaphysical good as "what is and ought to be loved." (An implication of this by the way is that no nonexistent humans ought to be loved; but what of the future generations? We won't broach this thorny problem here, however.) The word "love" here is somewhat equivocal. To love a hammer is to derive pleasure from its services, to love another person is to will good to him. It is precisely because within social cooperation under laissez faire other people's success is essential to my own that I will such success, and hence good, to them. Natural law then bids peace on earth and good will toward men. This good will is self-interested but a form of love nonetheless. It is different from self-sacrificial love which is due to grace, and the latter builds on the former. At the very least, man *ought not to be hated*; people ought to make profitable use of each other. The malevolence that sometimes attends vengeance or punishment might not be strictly unlawful, but even when thus ameliorated, it is still of dubious value. The hatred arising from competition such as in business is altogether wrong and is remedied by sportsmanship, summed up in the noble attitude "I love my competitors, but I'd hate to let them win."[b]

I will use the term "disinterestedness" to mean the attitude toward other human beings of pure unstained nature, i.e., one that is neither hateful and so below nature nor self-sacrificially loving and so above nature. Disinterested people are quite eager to team up with other members of society within the free market for common prosperity and abstain from violent crimes and fraud. They therefore keenly appreciate society as by far the most important *means to their own ends* and so rationally have a stake in preserving and bolstering society; but in their capacity as disinterested, they do not love other people as *ends in themselves*. They understand human nature well and use their fellow men justly and lawfully according to that nature for mutual profit (as murder and theft and so on are unnatural beastly actions, unbecoming a *rational* animal), but they lack any charity toward them as friends. This, however, is still immensely significant, since the first step to loving people, which any advanced ethics unconditionally demands, is to think of them, of everyone, as one's complements, first and foremost in the worldwide division of labor. This general good will, absence of soul-deforming cynicism, appreciation of the social order, if it be just, and of one's own justly and reasonably allotted place, including of income and wealth, in society within social cooperation under laissez-faire capitalism – these fall under my understanding of mutual disinterestedness.

Disinterestedness then is a state of fully developed or realized nature midway between subhuman hatred and superhuman charity.

There is indeed a measure of "virtue" in such "selfishness" if we contrast it with brutality and vandalism. Violent crime is similar to divorce in this sense. In a marriage the two hearts or wills intertwine through love, and the souls of the lovers dwell in one another. Divorce is a demonic black sacrament of the destruction of this spiritual union. The hearts are torn away from each other, and they hurt, and they bleed, and they may never heal, and even if they do, there is a loss. Injustice, too, tears asunder the social bonds of both capitalistic complementarity and Christian charity it took mankind millennia to develop.

In the state of nature, there are scarcely any positive duties, only negative duties of bourgeois noninterference with one's rights. Positive duties to render aid are Christian duties that belong to grace. A man who sees a wounded victim of robbery on the side of the road and ignores him and passes him by has not run afoul of any natural law. Our only response would be to say that nature can be cruel, but it is what it is. Now there may forsooth be a limited natural duty to rescue people from life-threatening situations. Crusoe benefits himself when he saves Friday from a shark, since that preserves an important for Crusoe "utensil." It may pay Crusoe even to help Friday get back on his feet if Friday falls ill. We can imagine Crusoe looking after the sick Friday, telling him, "I need you in good health to help me build a boat, since I can't do it alone." The difficulty in LS is that this duty falls onto no one in particular. Certainly it makes sense for a mariner in peril on the sea to be rescued, but the person or organization who will usually undertake this duty should agree to be bound by it voluntarily. Moreover, this duty may be obviated by Crusoe and Friday entering into an insurance contract: each will vow to nurse the other to health in case of necessity. The private insurance industry is the premier rescue system in a free society. Generally, then, the Good Samaritan who mercifully tended to the injured man was influenced by divine grace and Christian charity for fellow man and so is above his nature; he is godlike. The full metaphysical transformation of man will lead him from hatred to disinterestedness as I have described it to love of friendship for others. Our definition of metaphysical goods will apply to both metamorphoses.

For an illustration, take the 1997 Disney movie, *Hercules*, which has a very Christian motif. Hercules, who was born a god, is now mortal, though he retains his tremendous strength. His girlfriend Megara dies through the machinations of Hades, ruler of the underworld. The underworld is pictured as a river or lake in which the spirits of the dead drift or swirl about. Hercules offers Hades a deal: he will try to swim inside the lake to retrieve his beloved, and for that he agrees himself to die. Hades accepts. Hercules dives in and, as he is nearing Megara, he is visibly growing older. As Atropos the goddess of fate is preparing to cut the thread of Hercules' life, the hero reaches Megara, and the thread

turns golden and indestructible. The fate's scissors will not cut it. Hercules becomes deiform and immortal. This sort of noble self-sacrifice for the sake of another is far above the dictates of natural morality. There is no moral rule bidding anyone to die in anyone's place. We would not call Hercules a "just man" for his deed. And the reward for such an achievement is an upgrade in one's very nature: the hero transfigures into a god. Hence it is written: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."[43]

Charity cannot be interpreted as any mode of selfishness. For example, it's not as though you sacrifice yourself for a friend having cunningly calculated that life without him would be meaningless, and therefore death is the most profitable course of action. On the contrary, you forget about yourself, and in so doing reveal and free the divine refulgence in your heart, normally concealed under self-regarding daily anxieties.

Metaphysical *evil* is a tricky notion. At the very first glance it would seem that God is perfect on every level, yet no creature that emanates from God is such. All created nature is *metaphysically* imperfect; moreover, it is imperfect essentially, necessarily. No being that does not have a divine nature, including the universe as whole, can ever in principle be without fault or flaw with respect to its essence. Metaphysical evil would then be due simply to the distance between creaturely natures and the nature of God. This view, however, is a dangerous illusion, because evil generally is defined as absence of good that *ought to be there*. But no creature, though it is inferior to God, ought to be God. An angel ought to stay an angel, I'm quite happy being human, and even a frog ought to be nothing more or less than a frog. If we're looking for metaphysical evil, we won't find it here, though as we'll spell out later, God's inability to duplicate Himself in creatures is an aspect of *divine* evil.

There is moreover a sense in which the universe as a whole is perfect. For it may be 100% *suitable to the divine purpose*, such as soul-making, i.e., the making of holy men and women, folks who are part of the totality of the communion of saints and "worthy" of personal happiness. (NB: that the world is perfect for soul-making does not (and need not) mean that the souls made in it are perfect. Each person fashions himself however he can and presents his work to God for evaluation.) This point of course can function as a starting theodicy, i.e., a solution to the problem of compatibility of evil (of all three kinds) and God's goodness. For formidable though it is for a theist, evil is not necessarily better evidence for naturalism than it is for theism, because theism, too, predicts a battlefield earth, a bleak yet full of potential, vast but finite world suspended between heaven and hell in which human souls are forged. Further, the universe seems to *contain all grades of*

being, from ants to angels, from savage tigers to domestic cats. Thus, if God were to create another world, then He would merely be repeating what He has already done in this one. He could not top Himself. As divine art, the universe is really quite beautiful. Finally, if there is a created heaven, then the universe may feature the perfection of the *human body* and the *paradisial external environment* made exquisitely fit for human habitation, in which there is no pain nor sorrow nor illness nor sin.

Now the world that we know is clearly not an especially blissful place. One does not need to be particularly wise to concede that examples of metaphysical evils, defined by Alfred Sharpe as "the limitation by one another of various component parts of the natural world,"[44] abound: scarcity; the inevitability of death; temporal as opposed to eternal existence combined with the weakness of both memory and foresight; practical unavoidability of errors in life including those from which one cannot recover; natural poverty and more generally unlimited wants coupled with the paucity of power to satisfy them; to take complementary examples from physics and moral theology, entropy that wears on the body and temptations that wear on the soul; and suchlike. This sense of metaphysical evil, however important, takes God's point of view. Here, (1) a particular instance of pain is a *physical* evil; (2) if that physical evil is unjustly inflicted on one person by another, then this crime itself is an instance of *moral* evil; finally, (3) the general fact that pain is unavoidable in the life of a human being is a *metaphysical* evil, a fundamental and inescapable limitation of the world.

I will not use these terms this way. Since our subject is metaethics, we should begin at the beginning, that is, at our definition. We can immediately see that metaphysical evil in the relevant sense is for a human being to fail to love what, or rather who, ought to be loved to a proper extent, namely, *fully* to the extent that it is lovable, but also *only* to that extent. Metaphysical evil rightly understood then stems from the myriad forms of human sin.

A wise man loves others appropriately. In so doing he purifies his nature and himself comes to deserve to be loved by others. The stronger and cleverer you love, the more you yourself ought to be loved. Or in the language of nature, the more disinterested and naturally righteous you are, the easier it is for you to insist on your own rights and thus on the concomitant respect and regard by others. And to the extent that one violates the natural sovereignty of others, such as by aggressing against their person or property, he forfeits his own sovereignty. An outlaw can be justly killed or imprisoned.

A bad man omits loving all things rationally, to the extent they ought to be loved, both fully and only. In thus being a sinner, he himself

becomes less lovable. Thus, in hating certain things, a sinner falsely considers them evil or at least worse than they really are; in loving certain things he falsely considers them good or at least better than they really are. In such a corrupted state he himself is metaphysically evil. So, Jones is metaphysically good since he ought to be loved by any Smith as a human being. But insofar as Jones himself loves Robinson poorly or unwisely or indeed hates him, Jones is in part metaphysically evil. The eviler Jones is, the less he ought to be loved by Smith. Jones' metaphysical goodness depends on his own attitudes toward God and His creatures, such as angels, humans, and perhaps even pets.

Jones's intellect thus puts him on the spot and into a difficult position: he is required to make sense of the world and to love things correctly. If Jones is a saint, he is the noblest creature and himself is metaphysically good; if he is a sinner, he is the most disgusting aberration. Thus, St. Thomas writes: "God loves sinners in so far as they are existing natures; for they have existence and have it from Him. In so far as they are sinners, they have not existence at all, but fall short of it; and this in them is not from God. Hence under this aspect, they are hated by Him."[45] "*X* is hated" describes both physical and metaphysical evils, but for physical goods, the evil is in *X* – it would be better (for me in terms of my narrow happiness) if *X* were destroyed or ceased to be a state of affairs; while for metaphysical goods, the evil is in me – it would be better (for me in terms of my nature) if my hatred were to dissipate and be replaced with disinterestedness or charity. Physical evil means that the world falls short of how it ought to be for my pleasure; metaphysical evil means that I wickedly fall short of the correct level of my love for other people. A man's own lovability then hinges on how he loves others. Smith ought to love the saintly Robinson more than the sinful Jones. It follows that disinterestedness and love themselves ought to be loved because it is they that make one good, indeed St. Thomas avers that we ought to "love charity out of charity."[46]

Again, love and hate have different meanings when applied to physical and metaphysical goods. For the former, love means use, hatred means rejection; for the latter they mean willing good or evil to it. Self-interested love means "I will good to you for my sake"; charity means "I will good to you for God's and your own sake." Using another within complementary relationships entails self-interested love toward him, e.g., the route to personal wealth is to serve one's customers better than competition, any trade or business deal must be win-win in order to take place. Rejecting someone can lead to hatred such as as part of condemnatory punishment discussed above, but no one needs to be cast out if he himself welcomes all others as cooperators.

So love is recompensed with love, and hatred with hatred. For example, most people *want* to be loved and respected, to be

metaphysically good, and it is within their power to secure these ends by contributing to society. If we call the consumers' money "tokens of friendship," then in general the more you love others by solving their problems, the more the market will love you back and the more such tokens you will receive.

If we were doing theology, we'd probably want to make a connection between the partially wounded nature of man and partially wounded nature of the world as a whole, i.e., between my own and Sharpe's sense of metaphysical evil. Perhaps the Father created a world full of suffering and strife in anticipation of Adam's later eventual fall from innocence, or something of that sort. Far be it from me to exalt nature which for various reasons is imperfect, even obscene. It is merciless, else there would not be birth defects or sickness or famines or even economic externalities. Perhaps this is yet another way to appreciate the necessity of the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit: to compensate for the obvious incongruity between the ruthlessness of nature and its own scandalously degraded and perverse state. It is a visible injustice for God to subject us to judgment by something so patently corrupt and therefore unqualified to be an authority as the nature of the world. Nature is less our mother than stepmother, specifically Cinderella's and cruel. This is also why *worshiping* material nature, such as by holding that physical phenomena are in the care of spirits, is an unfortunate mistake the ancients occasionally made: in fact, nature is grim and implacable and will not be swayed by either prayers or curses.

We have defined *moral* good as that which both ought to be and ought to be loved. Since the soul is complex, it, too, needs to be in harmony. As for *character*, the virtue of courage, for example, is an objectively good thing; it thus ought to be loved; at the same time, one may partially lack this virtue and hence it ought to be (or if one has it, it ought to continue to be); one's character is to be lovingly cultivated. As for *self*, it, too, exists objectively and must be discovered. Self-love is a unifying force, and when strong, it safeguards the integrity of personality, of the sensitive and intellectual appetites, and of the mind and heart. Virtue is *objective* as the health of the soul itself because it is the soul that desires subjective goods. A sick soul is perpetually despondent. Health of the body, though a *universal* good (almost everyone *in fact* values it), is subjective in this way insofar as the body waits upon the soul. But since the soul and body are enmeshed into each other intimately, the distinction is somewhat blurred.

G.E. Moore who in a way pioneered the modern attempts to grapple with metaethics in *Principia Ethica*, too, was concerned with defining "goodness." He seemed to believe that the question "Is *X* good?" is "open" for all *X*. For all *X*, some *X*s might be good, but others

will not. Therefore, goodness cannot be reduced to any natural *X* understood as within the purview of natural and social sciences and psychology. As should be clear by now, an open question can, and this open question does, have a closed answer. Note incidentally that Moore argues that "good" is indefinable because it is simple as in non-composite, and such things cannot have definitions. He trots out the definition of a horse, saying that it "is composed in a certain manner: that it has four legs, a head, a heart, a liver, etc., etc., all of them arranged in definite relations to one another. It is in this sense that I deny good to be definable."[47] Isn't this outrageous? Suppose that good is indeed simple, as in having no components of which it might be made up. That only means that it lacks a *material* cause. It says nothing about its *formal* cause! The former, as we have seen, is an answer to the question, "What parts does good consist of?" The latter, to the question "What is good or the good?" These questions inquire of very different things, and conceding that materially, good is "nothing" does not entail that it is "nothing" formally, as well. Moore then uses the comparison of "good" to "yellow," saying that "yellow," too, is simple and (therefore) undefined. This, too, is nonsense. Yellow is "undefined" because it is a personal subjective experience, and those are fully private and incommunicable. How do I describe what yellow feels like to my sight? I cannot. How can I make sure that my experience of yellow is the same as your experience? I cannot do that, either, if that question is even meaningful. As a result, "yellow" cannot be defined other than by various types of ostension and hoping that our human bodies work sufficiently similarly that, however the mind-body connection is effected, the spiritual experiences are close to each other in "quality," as well, whatever exactly that means. Presumably, however, Moore does not hold that good, just like yellow, is a subjective experience. The analogy fails. Moore begs the question because there is no reason why I can't define "good" as whatever I feel like. More to point, however, defining "good" is a problem for philosophers, not for the average man on the street. If one such man says, "I'm not sure that Chernikov's definition of 'good' is correct," he demonstrates only that defining "good" is nontrivial, not that it is impossible. I indeed deny that my definition of "good" is trivial. Since goodness is a complex unity, it is difficult to say even something like "pleasure considered in itself and all other things being equal is good." For example, the more one rejoices over an evil done, the guiltier he is, which is undeniably bad; hence in some situations more pleasure is worse than less. Satisfaction in one's own worthlessness or incompetence is a positive evil. Again, it cannot be asserted flatly that "courage is good," lest a terrorist who sacrifices his life through unjust deeds or stupidly could be exalted for his virtue. Is goodness being "worthy of happiness"? Perhaps, but without actual

happiness, it counts for little. And so on. But Moore's questions are now easily answered with the help of our definition. "I see that this ice cream is being enjoyed by Smith, but is it a consumer / physical good?" Yes. "I agree that temperance is both a virtue and ought to be nurtured within the soul, but is it a moral good?" Again, yes. "I grant that Smith ought to be loved, but is he a metaphysical good?" Indubitably. "I know that God exists necessarily, and that He is irresistibly lovable by any creature who sees Him in His essence, but is God divinely good?" You had better believe He is. These are all of them perfectly closed questions. It might be thought that these definitions avoid the Moorean "naturalistic fallacy" precisely and only because the definientia are not naturalistic reductions – they contain "oughts" or in the case of God involve the supernatural. We'll discuss naturalism in due time. In any case, my definition of "good," by arranging the four types of goodness – physical, moral, metaphysical, and divine – into a system, eliminates unseemly philosophical groping in the dark.

I'm of course not interested in an exhaustive cataloguing of how the word "good" is used generally in the English language. For example, a thing may be judged good or better or worse according to how closely it adheres to a certain norm or standard. A good knife then would be one that cuts well, has a proper weight, is balanced, and so on. But this use of "good" has nothing to do with *metaethics*, since a good knife will remain good in this sense even without any humans around. Or if it does need humans, then it collapses straight into a physical good, since it stands to reason that a good knife must satisfy someone's actual desire efficiently. In "he is a good golfer," "good" means "skillful," and the point of the skill is to win at golf, and the point of that is somehow to make oneself better off. The skill is basically a labor factor of production and as such a form of physical good – human capital.

As we have seen from our definitions of the four teleological subcauses, the term "good" is in various senses evaluative, having to do with human feelings or attitudes. Good things either are loved or ought to be loved. That does not mean that "good" is in general a "commendatory" term. Attend to the following permutations. For physical goods, it is positively strange to commend, i.e., praise, a dish in a restaurant, though one may commend the cook. It's not like the dish *cares*. Nor need one *re*commend it to others, and in any case since the goodness of such things is subjective and relative, no one is duty-bound to mind such recommendations. To the extent that courage is an objective moral good, we do not commend it, but we do recommend it to all comers. To call someone a metaphysical good is to commend him for his exalted nature, but hardly to recommend becoming human to frogs. Finally, in calling God "good" we commend Him, indeed we worship and glorify Him. And in a real sense we recommend that others

partake of His goodness however they can.

Geach has contended that "good" is attributive and never predicative. "*X* is a red car" can be split into "*X* is red" and "*X* is a car"; hence "red" can be used predicatively. But "*X* is a putative father" cannot be split into "*X* is putative" and "*X* is a father"; so "putative" is an attributive adjective.[48] Therefore, "*X* is a good *Y*" is meaningless until we know what *Y* means, and its goodness, so Geach maintains, will depend on what sort of thing it is and especially on the function it performs. Geach's aim is to shore up a version of naturalism, and by "Smith is a good man" he means not that Smith is metaphysically good and ought to be loved by other humans but that, in our terms, Smith is uncorrupt or truly happy, in which case it makes sense to argue that "good" is attributive only. There is likewise little sense in splitting "*X* is a good hygrometer" into "*X* is good" and "*X* is a hygrometer." But this is an exceedingly narrow construal of goodness. Indeed, in our scheme *X* is admirably predicative. Any *thing*, whatever it may be, can be physically, morally, metaphysically, and even divinely good, even if we have no idea what it is. "Physically good *Y*" means that *Y* satisfies someone's desire or is useful to someone in some way. "Morally good *Y*" refers to some excellence of the soul. "Metaphysically good *Y*" is anything to which we owe duties of non-maleficence or charity. Admittedly, "divinely good *Y*" signifies that *Y* is God whose essence consists in the diffusion of His goodness, but "good" is predicative even here: it is perfectly sensible to voice the conjunction of "*Y* is divinely good" and "*Y* is God." For reasons like these I am ignoring all such complications.

In this chapter I have completed the system begun in Chapter 1 and attempted to prove certain moral propositions (like "slavery is wrong") from "ground up" without appeal to any intuitions, either of conscience or of moral theories like utilitarianism (which intuits that it is one's moral duty to maximize general happiness). This need not be the *only* source of moral insight (though I think it's a crucial one), and if it is not, then the deliverances of the various methods of doing ethics will need to be harmonized in the manner of the Rawlsian "reflective equilibrium." These basics of moral law have been discovered a priori rather than inductively. We arrived at our conclusions not by making sets of observations (such as indeed intuitions) and generalizing laws from them but by dwelling on the essence of human relations, good and evil, duty, right and wrong, reason and will.

Footnotes

a. The criminal treats his victim like dirt, he despises his dignity. When the victim personally attempts to exact retribution on the criminal, he seeks to raise his status

unjustly lowered and lower that of the criminal unjustly raised. This we call vengeance. But a crime is in addition an offense against and insult to the sovereign whose rational order is upset and violated; and when the sovereign brings retribution, we call it justice. But it need not be too important who the instrument of punishment is as long as truth and proportionality are observed.

b. Competition can be justified on utilitarian grounds, as well as by the principle of double effect: it is lawful to seek victory; that others lose as a result is a foreseen but strictly speaking unintended side effect, and since the winner does not *intend harm* to the losers, neither does he *hate* them. This argument does not of course justify something like war, in which others lose not in the sense of coming in second or third or receiving less profit or getting passed over for a promotion by someone more qualified but in the sense of dying at the victor's hand.

Endnotes

1. Kreeft, *Handbook*, 54-5.

2. *ST*, I, 1, 6.

3. *ST*, II-II, 45, 6.

4. Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, $1241^{b}30$.

5. Blackstone, *Commentaries*, Section 2.

6. Hume, *Treatise*, Book 2, Part 3, Section 3.

7. *HA*, 170.

8. Bush, *Servitude*, 17.

9. Gen 29:14-18.

10. Num 11:4-6.

11. *HA*, 832.

12. Mises, *Liberalism*, 192-3.

13. *HA*, 146.

14. Harman, "Moral Relativism Defended," 5.

15. Scanlon, *What We Owe*, 164-5.

16. Ibid., 19.

17. *HA*, 2.

18. Harman, *Moral Relativism and Moral Objectivity*, 7.

19. *HA*, 8-9.

20. Mises, *Socialism*, 440-1.

21. *HA*, 8.

22. Knight, “Rights,” 128.

23. Ibid., 125.

24. I borrow these terns from Scheffler, *Human Morality*.

25. This phrase is from Williams, *Luck*, 18.

26. Ben Sira 15:14.

27. *ST*, I, 6, 4.

28. Jm 4:14; Ps 39:7.

29. Mt 3:9.

30. *HA*, 144.

31. *HA*, 677.

32. *HA*, 280.

33. *HA*, 146.

34. *HA*, 160.

35. *EL*, 213.

36. Mises, *Omnipotent*, 184.

37. Cf. Kinsella, “Punishment.”

38. Yeager, *Ethics*, 171.

39. Plato, *Republic*, 362c.

40. *HA*, 144.

41. Plato, *Republic*, 359-360.

42. Joyce, *Myth*, 60.

43. Jn 15:13.

44. *CE*, “Evil.”

45. *ST*, I, 20, 2, reply 4.

46. *ST*, II-II, 25, 2.

47. Moore, *Principia*, §8.

48. Geach, “Good and Evil.”

3. Two Theories of Motivation

For all three human trinities within, there are states and acts as laid out in Table 11. All states are habits (from Latin *habere*, to have), but the "having" proceeds in different directions. Relations *have you* (you are *in* relationships, literally); virtues *are* you; and *you have* arts and techniques. One way of distinguishing between virtues and arts is to say that it is better to fail to be virtuous involuntarily than voluntarily, and vice versa for arts. Though arts, like virtues, denote a state of the soul or some excellence possessed, they are beholden fully to search for narrow happiness. The point of an art is to *do* well; the point of a virtue is to *be* good. Aristotle argues that "since the activity is better than the state, and the best activity than the best state, and excellence is the best state, that the activity of the excellence of the soul is the best thing."[1] This is true for an art: it is better to "cure a disease" than to "be a doctor"; it is better, more generally, to "succeed" than merely to "have qualities requisite for success." The art is subservient to and for the sake of its performance. But not a virtue: it is better to "love music" than merely to "have enjoyed listening to music a few times"; again, it is better "not to be a glutton" than to "have on many occasions eaten in moderation." Thus, for both virtues and arts, there are states and activities; it is just that for arts, the activity is better than the state; and for virtues, the state is better than the activity (though, to flip the terms, a sin is worse than a vice). Finally, for nature, relations and duties are equally important. "To be just" is almost identical to "to respect private property" and so on.

	States	**Acts**
Nature	Relations	Duties
Personality	Self: Sophisticated tastes	Cultivation of the soul
Character: Virtues		
Narrow Happiness	Arts	Human actions, executions of plans to satisfy desires

Table 11. States and acts of the trinities within.

Charity and wisdom are ultimately relations, prudence and courage are ultimately generalized arts (as essential for procuring any physical good), and temperance and justice are exclusively virtues that specify the structure of the soul. Yet *as* virtues all these are moral goods

and as such ought to be and ought to be loved, if each for slightly different reasons.

James Fox describes the meaning of duty as follows: “When, concerning a contemplated act one forms the decision ‘I ought to do it,’ the words express an intellectual judgment. But unlike speculative judgments, this one is felt to be not merely declaratory. Nor is it merely preferential; it asserts itself as imperative and magisterial.”[2] Above we have proven with some rigor that one ought not to steal, for example. We have done so, especially in a “small society,” by appealing to the teleological nature of man. But now that the theorem “you shall not steal” has been proven, we can wield it as is without referring to the axioms. Therefore, even in a large society, each man is established to have duties, such as to respect his fellows’ natural rights. “You have a duty not to steal” is now a true proposition of ethics.

Ethics is a systematic theory of what is forbidden to man though he may want it, and what is required of him though he may want to omit it, and what he can do when faced with such a conflict. To further the exposition, ethics postulates duties to man which in various senses must be done regardless of his own desires or ends. The crucial point that will be used in the construction of our metaethics is that mere external obedience to duty is not enough; what is truly called for is repentance and inner regeneration, a purification of human nature corrupted by sin. If one’s unlawful desires ought not to be satisfied, it is not enough that one suffers from their pull forever without taking steps to quell them. What is needed is the very destruction of those desires. The beast in one’s heart must be starved to *death*. Realizing that it’s one’s duty not to murder furnishes a motivation to suppress the evil desire to murder, but this desire itself is not defenseless and cries out to be fulfilled. The duty is supposed to provide an overriding reason not to murder and would if men were not sinners. It is our wounded and corrupted nature that may sometimes cause in the contest between suppressing a desire and satisfying it the latter to win. This is of course irrational, because one must then repent of his sin, at least eventually (or go to prison and ultimately hell), but repentance involves a rejection of the pleasure obtained illegally thereby, as well as guilt, shame, and painful memories. Crime does not pay. Yet the passion may be so intense as to overwhelm reason for a time which makes it a sin due to weakness.

It is not a trivial chore to cure oneself of metaphysical evil, if only for the reason that suppressing desires generally is unnatural and torturous. Desires are designed to be satisfied, not extinguished. But again, our perverted nature sometimes spawns vile desires that must be purged from the soul so that one may be a human being rather than an animal or demon. Evil desires must be actively strangled, not merely set

aside. For we all at any moment have a choice to drop philosophy and start committing violent crimes. Most of us, if we were to attempt this exercise of deciding on the future course of our lives, would have no problem calmly brushing aside the felonious choices, picking up the book, and forgetting all about them. But an actual bandit is *tempted*; for example, he hates though he also fears punishment. Though he may refrain from *acting* on his crooked desires for a variety of reasons, he *feels* their sick appeal. Where in the choice between a chocolate and vanilla ice cream there is no right answer, in this case there is: the right answer is righteousness, and the wrong answer is wickedness. The criminal is commanded by duty to repress his evil plots, precisely in the case where he would gladly indulge in them. Choices that are set aside may be enjoyed at least while daydreaming; it's permissible to feel and even savor them in the heart though they never come to pass; whereas evil feelings are altogether *illegal* and cannot be entertained at all, since doing so destroys charity and brutalizes and harms the soul.

One may of course ponder and discuss evil scientifically, but he must never take pleasure in evil while doing so. When the *intellect* contemplates evil things, it uplifts them, and they, as ideas or forms in the mind, become good. When the *will*, on the contrary, is attracted to evil things, it moves toward them and, in loving them, is degraded and itself becomes evil.

It may be objected that it is not wrong to be conflicted between a duty such as keeping a promise and some material gain from breaking it. St. Thomas writes, for example, that one of the things Christ taught us in praying in the Garden was that "it is lawful for man to will, according to his natural inclination, a thing which God does not will." Much more then is it lawful to will something that is contrary to a mere human duty. And it is true that desire for narrow happiness as such is perfectly alright, and, far from needing to be quashed, must often be deliberately strengthened, such as against despair or sloth. But then even a criminal's desire for money which he is planning to obtain through an armed robbery is inoffensive. What is wicked is willing the means which involve infringement of the duty insofar as they are willed along with the end. It's true that the criminal might not *enjoy* robbing his victims, treating it as labor with its own costs, such as the risk of being killed in self-defense or later caught and punished. But he *wills* it, perhaps because he finds the thought of honest work even less appealing, and hence *desires* it, since choosing the least of several evils constitutes desiring it. The soul cannot help being hurt by an injustice perpetrated in the pursuit even of a legitimate aim. As natural inclinations are subject to God, so unnatural inclinations are subject to duty. There is a disanalogy. St. Thomas continues: "there is nothing wrong in our shrinking from what is naturally grievous, so long as we

bring our emotions into line with the *divine will*."[3] But there *is* a wrong in being tempted by evil desires, and such perversions must be brought into line with the *human reason*.

Note that if I currently believe, for example, that eating meat is morally permissible and later change my mind and hold that it is forbidden, then I obviously cannot alter my sensitive appetite, namely the fact that meat tastes good, but I may be able to twist my intellectual appetite or my will to come to deplore meat-eating such as for its injustice or some other failing.

Gary Watson considers "the case of a woman who has a sudden urge to drown her bawling child in the bath; or the case of a squash player who, while suffering an ignominious defeat, desires to smash his opponent in the face with the racquet." They do not "assign to these actions an initial value which is then outweighed by other considerations. These activities are not even represented by a positive entry, however small, on the initial 'desirability matrix.'"[4] I don't buy Watson's distinction between "valuing" and "desiring" (which among other things just seem to be synonyms in ordinary language), but his point stands. These desires are objectively *evil* and have no right to exist. A woman who got the urge to drown her child frequently, however well she resisted it, would herself be morally corrupt. Desires can become wicked by being unduly swayed by lower passions, such as pathological fear (corresponding to the red chakra), lust or any disordered concupiscence (orange), or wrath (yellow, the irascible passions). Wrath, for example, as in the case of the squash player, is not mere anger; it both is unjust and knows no bounds; it will not stop until its object is completely destroyed, and it does not care about collateral damage. These passions are rightly called sins, because they need to be neutralized by or brought under control of reason. We may even aver that having a pure heart is a condition of full rationality. Setting aside less valuable ends in choosing is a *physical (opportunity) cost*; squelching evil desires is a *metaphysical benefit*.

In the game *Warcraft 3*, the pit lord Mannoroth recruits the orcish chieftain Grom into service with the following speech: "Stupid, pitiful creature. I am the rage in your heart. I am the fury of your thoughts. I alone empowered you to bring chaos to this world, and by the endless void, you shall!" See how the rage, fury, and chaos are neatly mapped onto will, intellect, and body? Eventually, Grom rebels and slays Mannoroth but is himself mortally wounded. His last words are: "The blood haze has lifted. The demon's fire has burnt out in my veins. I have… freed myself." Grom's contrition shows that morality is not *just* about exterior acts.

Individual freedom is essentially permission, internal by duties or external by the state. Abiding by duties sets one free, but duties are not

done for their own sake but in order to cleanse man from inner rot. They do not turn a man into a machine; they (eventually) turn a monster into a man. It is inhuman to have a desire to murder; thankfully, there is an equally terrible remedy for it, which is to suppress the desire, to put out its hellish flame (since *human* desires are meant to be satisfied not snuffed out). Duties then do not compel merely "right" outward conduct. This would be pointless, since humans would then be likened to androids ruled solely by physical causation. Even *deontological* duties, then, respect and are compatible with the human unique *teleological* nature. But they compel spiritual rebirth first and behavior only as a consequence. Given that "you ought not to steal" posits a duty, if you have no interest in stealing, the duty passes you by as if unseen, just as the police leave innocent people alone. You already have a holy will. Otherwise, you are commanded to purify yourself by driving your kleptomania out of your soul. Thus, if *X* is the "right thing," then you do *X* not because you want to do *X*, for the whole problem is that you are seriously tempted *not* to do *X*; nor because you fetishistically want to do the right thing whatever it happens to be, as if possessed by an angel; but so that by doing *X* you might bend your very heart.

In doing our duties, then, we are not being moral fetishists, doing the right thing *simply* because it is right and regardless of the features that make it right. We first attend to the proof that a duty obtains to assure ourselves that it is genuine. Then, however, having been thus advised, we do it because it is required. I abstain from murder because I have understood that murder is wrong and *why*. But once enlightened, I no longer need to focus on the proof in my daily life: the ethical theorem acquires a life of its own and is used as a nontrivial principle in complex ethical reasoning. This is of course no different from any axiomatic-deductive discipline: a proof of one math theorem can draw upon a dozen other difficult theorems as uncontroversially established and be no less valid for all that.

The statement "I want to do the right thing" can be read de re or de dicto. The de re reading might be "I want to save the whales which happens to be right." This is merely a statement of a desire with no ethical import. It's a lucky happenstance that what you want to do for your own profit is also right; but presumably you could with equal probability want to do something that happened to be wrong such as nuke the whales instead. The de dicto reading is "I want to do right thing, whatever it happens to be; if saving the whales is right, then that's what I'm doing; if not, not." This at least has something to do with morality but is indeed fetishist. A duty does not enjoin me to obey without thinking. The point is not to perform a meaningless ritual consisting in some bodily motions. On the contrary, I must both know

human nature in general to reason out my duty and my own self to know which of my desires stand in need of purification by the stern hand of natural law. In a morally poignant situation, the de dicto reading is implausible anyway: I *don't* want to do the right thing! What I "want" is to sin and precisely *avoid* doing the right thing, and my duty *coerces* me to fall in line. There is a moral duty-driven motivation to erase within the depths of my soul the desire-driven motivation to act immorally, such as at least not to fall into temptation and ideally not to be tempted at all, with the thought of sinning never even occurring to me.

There is then no such thing as desire-driven moral motivation taken *either* way. Doing the right thing can be unpleasant, though it can be mostly painless if done out of habit. I do not then "desire" to do what is right; I am commanded to do it unequivocally if I am to retain my humanity. Desires do not enter into the equation. Here natural morality differs somewhat from Christian morality. For the former, enlightened self-interest (in a small society, as well as fear of punishment in a large society) motivates, as per our proofs; the task of achieving spiritual normalcy commands. For the latter, a man blessed with the grace of self-sacrificial charity in his heart will do good to others willingly and gladly. Even then, however, a prior understanding that some work of mercy, such as instructing the ignorant, is indeed ethically good is requisite. Such a man will succor his neighbor both because it is a duty and an act of Christian justice (whose most important effect is *growth* in charity), and because charity is marked by union and mutual indwelling of souls, so the neighbor's joy is the man's own profit, as well. Existing charity motivates; the commission to increase in charity commands. If I don't want to kill, the duty not to kill is superfluous since my desires are already pure. If there is a motivation to do what is right taken de re, the moral duty is irrelevant; I simply enjoy doing certain things and do them for my own fun or profit; that they are also "right" is icing on the cake. De re desire to do the right thing then is physical not moral motivation, though it has morality's blessing and duty's contentment.

Natural law then bids us to cleanse our desires. This answers the objection that a duty perversely rides roughshod over our teleological natures. A duty is not a type of physical cause which we must *mindlessly* obey, as our bodies would *have to* be hurt if struck with a billiard ball. Rather, we must expunge wrongful hatred for natural morality and foster charity for Christian morality. This is no doubt harrowing physically and in the short run: both evil and selfish desires cry out for satisfaction and resist being crushed. Yet the inner transformation will contribute to our true happiness in the end. So, we obey the duty *because* it is commanded but (1) we understand why it is a duty and (2) the obedience is rational and wise. As we can see, then, performing a

moral duty is still aimed at securing a good, though not any sort of grotesque utilitarian greatest (physical) good for the greatest number, but rather the metaphysical good of the duty-doer.

Lillehammer defends the "fetishism" by considering

> the case of the father who discovers that his son is a murderer, and who knows that if he does not go to the police the boy will get away with it, whereas if he does go to the police the boy will go to the gas chamber. The father judges that it is right to go to the police, and does so. … If what moves the father to inform on his son is a standing desire to do what is right, where this is read de dicto, then this could be as much of a saving grace as a moral failing. Why should it be an a priori demand that someone should have an underived desire to send his son to death?[5]

This misses the point. The father does not have a desire to send his son to death. Instead, he has two conflicting desires: to save his son and to see that justice is done. To want justice to be done which happens to be right is the relevant de re reading. It may of course be that the father does not care (enough) about justice. There is, however, a moral *duty* to promote justice, such as to cooperate with the police. (A complication in this case is that there may also be a duty to take care of one's family.) It is certainly not unlawful to love one's children, but it may be unlawful to despise justice even in the face of a great sacrifice. If the father is tempted to do the latter, then the duty bids him to reform. The soul both is revealed and changes through deeds.

It is senseless and indeed a fetish to say simply "I want to obey the law, whatever it may be." One may want to obey not to get in trouble with the cops. Or to stroke his ego. Or one may believe that the law secures the common good which he loves, and he does not want by pursuing his own interests to harm this common good. Or he does not want, by breaking the law, to feel remorse. Or he might want to obey a particular law even if he deems it stupid or unjust in order to cultivate the spirit of cooperative docility in himself. But all these reasons are desires to obey the law taken de re not de dicto.

If there is a grain of truth in the idea that one may have a desire for righteousness taken de dicto, it's that apprehension of a moral duty may come with *fear* of the consequences of failing to abide by it. As we've seen in Table 3, this fear of the law is the fruit of wisdom and love of friendship and belongs under "power" as its bedrock, protecting it from being misdirected toward evil. Fear is not desire, but it can, just like all the lower passions in Table 10, serve as an input to the will which from a multitude of such inputs synthesizes a desire. There may then from the fear of self-destruction come the desire to steer clear of it,

the desire not to do the morally wrong thing, and as a corollary, the general standing desire to do the right thing. For natural morality, the fear of the law is *servile* and chills the soul to the core; for Christian morality, the corresponding fear is *filial* or the fear of offending or disappointing the Lord and rends the heart with less force. It, too, may produce a desire to do works of mercy and suchlike, whatever they may be. These desires, however, are physical not moral; that is, they are desires for some physical goods such as avoidance of various kinds of pain, not for metaphysical goods such as standing in right relations with fellow men. They are self-, not other-regarding. The same argument would apply to even more remote cases, such as when a man has a de dicto desire to do what is right not *because* it is right but to acquire a reputation for justice while always being prepared to act unjustly at any opportunity.

It follows that moral facts, by generating duties that erode or inflame desires, are quite respectably causally efficacious. Abstract objects like numbers and possible worlds exist only ideally, in the mind, and do not cause events. (I don't mean that all causally inefficacious things are merely ideal, but there is no need to enter into a discussion of this problem here.) Unlike them, moral facts and the moral law as a whole have real (spiritual) effects which proves their real existence within the fabric of the universe. The reason why we believe the Pythagorean theorem is that it was deduced a priori from the Euclidean axioms; the theorem explains why, when we actually measure any right triangle, its sides will always be in the relation specified by the theorem; and it explains, for example, the success of our construction projects which make use of geometry. Likewise, we countenance the moral law because it is deductively derived; the law explains why the soul of a good man is vigorous and beautiful, while the soul of a bad man is sick and withered; and it explains why, when people follow the moral law, they draw nigh to their true happiness, and why, when they defy it, terrible things ensue. The moral law does not predict how things will definitely turn out since it can be broken, but it predicts enough.

A sin, conceived especially as a violation of interpersonal justice, for a human being engaged as he must be in spiritual combat is like an injury to an athlete, except the injury is done to, indeed is self-inflicted on, one's soul not body. As such, it is painful, it makes one weaker and stupider, it forces him to withdraw from exercise, it begets further sins, even if he repents it waylays him for a time while his soul heals. His true happiness suffers even as his narrow happiness momentarily though illusorily increases. Metaphysical goodness is a foundation for moral goodness and that in turn for physical goodness; the latter cannot endure if the former is unsteady or defective. There may seem to be a tension here between the idea that duty is overriding and my

naturalistic understanding of it, such that for example, the wrongness of *X* consists in the fact that by doing *X*, specifically by indulging and feeding one's desire to do *X*, one will wound his own soul. (The moral property "sinfulness" is realized by many different descriptive properties, since there is a diverse assortment of sins; just as many different crimes can be "wrong." But the essence of sin or wrongness is spiritual self-destruction, or so my natural law ethics would have it.) The resolution is to decree that it is (almost) never rational to trade off one's metaphysical good for any physical good or pleasure. It may be objected: must one keep a promise even if, e.g., he gets sick? I think morality often integrates exceptions to its rules where a man is released from a duty if the costs to him are sufficiently steep. We might say that morality implicitly incorporates "force majeure" clauses. But when the duty still holds, it has priority.

Two conflicting desires are *pro tanto* in the sense that while deliberating, neither neutralizes the other. But at least ideally, the reason of narrow self-interest is only *prima facie* when faced with the competition from the reason of duty: the duty demands unconditional surrender. Moreover, the desire that is set aside might get attended to later; on the other hand, the courses of action recommended by duty and pleasure are 100% incompatible – a satisfied desire was not extinguished, and an extinguished desire can no longer be satisfied, so whatever is picked will make the other choice forever impossible. We can see how there is a certain terrifying responsibility as regards our nature: the metaphysical choices we make are irreversible.

The hypothesis that *only* desires motivate has been called the "Humean theory of motivation" (HUM).[a] Obeying natural law contributes to *true* happiness, so in this most general sense, it is a costly means to an ultimately profitable end. But it can severely reduce *narrow* happiness. That's why we reject HUM for the nature trinity. Economics, which regards physical goods, takes men and their desires as they are. Ethics does not. Economics is value-free, judging only means and not ends. Ethics, again, is not; on the contrary, it remakes corrupt and twisted men – born under a bad sign with a blue moon in their eyes – in the true image of God who *only then* become qualified to seek personal virtue and finally narrow "economic" happiness. Any genuine repentance that bears spiritual fruit must be accompanied by proper works. Thus, a criminal who repents must by natural law give back or away all of his ill-gotten goods, and then some. This makes him narrowly unhappy, rendering his previous attempts to make himself better off by evil means entirely otiose. The contemplation of his past misdeeds will further bring him not pride and pleasure but shame and sorrow. His victims will become his lords, and he will feel bound in service to fellow men until his debt is paid in full; hence he will be

discouraged from fighting for narrow happiness for himself in the future. Crime is a dead end.

Desire-driven and duty-driven motivations are exhaustive; there is no other kind. The claim that prudential calculations cast doubt on this idea does not hold water. Whatever aim (in terms of narrow happiness) one seeks has the form of *future* expected utility. Any physical good must be produced before it can be consumed, even if production is as quick and simple as making a sandwich. And production takes time. It may be that I have a desire for a sandwich right now and would be delighted if production were instant, and the sandwich materialized in my hands immediately; in this case I foresee that the desire will *persist* during the period of production. Or it may be that I foresee that the desire for the sandwich will *arise* later, such as tomorrow when I'm hungry, or along with the good if the smell of ketchup will stimulate my appetite, in which case I will prudently go to the store right now to buy groceries. In both cases I'm enticed by the anticipated enjoyment of the sandwich. On the one hand, it would be paradoxical to allude to a present desire to take care of future desires. And on the other, practical reason *informs* me that my self is four-dimensional and endures through time, but it does not *command* me to provide for future pleasures. In fact, I don't need any reasons for this at all, as it is an elemental property of my will, and I cannot help engaging in it by my very nature.

It is of course not true that merely having a desire immediately supplies one with a conclusive reason for action, a straw man of an argument elaborately demolished by Scanlon (1998). One has to *choose* between the incompatible ends and means, all of which except for one end and one means (or plan of action) will be rejected for the sake of the most highly valued pair, but the option finally settled on will be set to satisfy *some* desire that is expected to last until the plan at length comes to fruition. The task of prudence or practical reasoning is to serve the pursuit of narrow happiness, in short, to maximize one's profits. All reasons pro and con for various courses of action enter into the calculations of the costs and benefits of satisfying conflicting desires. There is no enjoyment without a desire that the pleasure satisfies, due allowance being made for the dual nature of the human appetite. (And if a desire *could* be satisfied costlessly, that is, without physical, moral, or metaphysical opportunity costs, then it entirely by itself would indeed outfit one with a perfectly cogent reason to act on it.) Whatever final choice is made, it by that fact and as seen by the agent at the time will be profit-maximizing. There is no such thing as a "reason to want" some physical good; one simply wants it, and then he has a reason to strive to get what he wants. A desire further is not something one is "nagged by" as if it were an irritating bug one would like to squish. Certainly some

pathological desires like an obsessive-compulsive urge and evil desires are best banished. But uneasiness involved in a desire is not pain but *potency* continuously produced in the soul without an aspect of something evil. It is like an empty vessel that is created so that it may be filled with future delight. What may be painful is not the desire but restrictions on freedom or power when it comes to soothing it. Though, as Sidgwick contends, as long as there is hope of attainment, even temporary frustration need not be classed as pain.

Duties are double-edged. Bernard Williams mentions Henry James' story *Owen Wingrave*, in which Owen's family insist that the young man join the military in the name of a long tradition, family honor, duties of a protector, and manly virtues.[6] Owen has no interest in a military career. What sense is there in the proposition that Owen "ought" to become a soldier? He may want to join the army if he wishes to please his father or for the sake of continuing the tradition. But those are internal reasons bound up with 1st-order desires. Otherwise, since this is not a purely natural duty, obedience makes sense only on the condition that sooner or later Owen will come to *enjoy* his choice, even if right now he has no desire to be a soldier. He may foresee his future contentment himself, or his family members may know or believe they know what's ultimately best for him. But this is nonnegotiable. For Owen robotically to defer to his relatives and to carry out his alleged duty despite abhorring it and despite, as the future would show, continuing to abhor it for the rest of his life is an act of terrible violence against his own nature. It's literal imprisonment, though not by the external state department of corrections but by an internal "duty." There is no point to it since *both* his narrow and true happiness will be diminished by joining the military. Owen would be well advised not to sacrifice his happiness to other people's unreasonable expectations. So, yes, duties can subjugate and imprison. G.A. Cohen proposes that we all have a moral duty somehow to be equal to each other in income, wealth, and even felt happiness. This monstrous "egalitarian ethos" imposes a nightmarish burden on people "voluntarily" to enslave themselves to the state. See Chernikov, *Cohen*.

Why is there a gap between what we ought to do and what we desire to do, with the law compelling us to decontaminate our wills? Why don't men act according to their nature with the same fluency as billiard balls or tigers do? Precisely because in every man, this nature is partially disordered and warped. It is not so warped that we are altogether unable to envision it in a pure state, but repairing oneself can take half a lifetime of supremely difficult effort. And if Christianity is true, then healing our nature is only the beginning. On immaculate nature divine grace can, if bestowed, then securely rest, and progressing in love can take the other half of life.

For a moral man, then, the law and its duties lose their motivating function, except insofar as to command him to *stay* moral in his love for natural or Christian justice. It may bid one perhaps to continue growing in charity. This is because a habit once acquired can be lost through neglect or sin, and because charity as a theological virtue observes no mean but can increase forever. But as long as charity or even disinterestedness endures, the moral law fades somewhat into the background. When there is no metaphysical evil in a person, there is nothing to correct by heeding the moral law. There is no longer pressure from the law to become good, since one has done just that. “Whatever feels good, do it” is nihilistic for sinners[7] yet a perfectly valid principle for saints. Guiltless pleasure, sophisticated play are a transcendence of self-consciousness and moral responsibility: you master yourself and then give up all control, standing beside yourself in self-forgetful ecstasy. Narrow happiness crowns righteousness and virtue. What Philippa Foot calls “deep happiness” and what Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi labels “flow” may well be the Aristotelian “activity of the excellence of the soul”: a Zen-like undisturbed exercise of one’s own well-honed power. If your heart is pure, by all means follow it; otherwise force the heart to follow reason. If you desire to break the law, stop, and let the law break your desire instead.

The effects of sin are threefold: corruption of nature which is the evil of fault and guilt (for having given into wicked desires one should have tried to get rid of), stain on the soul which is the evil of self-hatred and shame, and the debt of punishment or the evil of pain. Keirsey argues that each of his temperaments prizes different things as regards one’s self-respect, self-esteem, and self-confidence. Thus, a Rational finds self-respect in autonomy, self-esteem in ingenuity, and self-confidence in resolve or willpower; an Artisan yearns to be audacious, artistic, and adaptable respectively; and so on. Self-respect is seated in the intersection of the nature trinity and intellect in Table 3. Since human dignity is bound up with undefiled nature, guilt undermines self-respect; one sees himself as less than fully human and despises himself therefrom. Self-esteem belongs to the intersection of the personality trinity and the will in Table 4. Shame comes in two kinds; the first is through false pride in one’s power or spiritual beauty as overestimating them; then when one fails or is revealed for what he truly is, he may feel humiliated. This type of shame is simply natural punishment for the preexisting vice of vanity. A humble person need not be exposed to it at all. More reasonable shame is due to the recognition of one’s own spiritual ugliness. Gibbard (1990) links it with abandonment as other people value the unclean man less, refuse to include him into joint projects by finding him useless and, in our case of a sinner or criminal, repulsive and dangerous. When a man is ashamed of himself, he loves

and esteems himself less. Self-confidence is located in the intersection of the narrow happiness trinity and power in Table 4. Pain of punishment is a form of failure and quite adequately demolishes one's self-confidence.

Since an interpersonal injustice is a foundational evil, the effects of sin touch all three trinities within. An evil man loses his friends, since he cannot love them and since through his crimes, he turns them into enemies. He is thus crazy in the sense that he has become convinced that society, i.e., other people, are his enemies, whom he wholeheartedly hates, to be fought, desperately, and hurt and pushed around at every opportunity. The obvious truth that without the society surrounding him he not only would be destitute but simply would not exist escapes him, making him irrational if not insane. He loses the capacity to weave his own personality; indeed, all personal virtues for a metaphysically evil sinner lose their essential character and become aspects of madness. A murderer does not display "courage" even if he is fighting the cops; a thief is not being "prudent" even if he for a time eludes capture. Virtues are supposed to make one's soul lovely and assist him in his pursuit of narrow happiness, not contribute to dooming him to perdition. It is pointless for a sinner to develop his tastes since there are few opportunities for an enlarged capacity for pleasure in prison. His personality then is exceedingly simple, not in the sense of "wise as serpents and simple as doves," nor in the sense of possessing integrity through which even complex personalities can be well-unified and free from inner conflict or contradiction, but rather primitive, savage, *boring*. And of course he suffers punishment which may be external in the form of pain of sense or pain of loss (i.e., deprivation of pleasure or liberty) or internal in the form of torments of his own conscience. All three loves are undone, and all unions broken: for fault, he is hated by God and men; for shame, he hates himself; for pain, he is hated by his own body. The three evils are terrifying afflictions that remind the sinner of the threat to his identity as a human being; it's as if his very soul was bleeding or falling apart.

As sin butchers all three *trinities* in this fashion, so punishment (the third effect) is felt on all three *levels*. Punishment by human authorities hurts the 1st-level body, self-punishment due to remorse of conscience, the 2nd-level soul, divine punishment, 3rd-level charity as God withdraws communion.

On the other hand, let's say there are minimum wage positive laws on the books. Now those are deeply perverse, uneconomic, and unjust. A certain company quietly makes a deal with Smith to hire him at a wage below the legal minimum. This is entirely praiseworthy. The government gets a whiff of this and punishes Smith (for selling his labor below the price floor). Smith suffers pain but not guilt or shame, having

done nothing intrinsically wrong, other than skirting an evil regulation by a tyrannical state. Perhaps his nature as a citizen-serf is partially corrupted, but it was not worth preserving much in the first place. Smith need not experience the evils of fault and self-hatred. Violating a natural interhuman law then is malum in se; flouting a positive incentive is malum prohibitum only, and it is not always "malum" at all. Good positive laws made by a government are a rarity, dealing on the local level perhaps with some occasional externalities and public goods. Most positive laws are statist monstrosities. A man who dodges the draft is a hero – why be enslaved to go and kill unjustly and die pointlessly for lies? One ought instead to game the system and stay a human being, both spiritually and physically. There is no fault or shame in this, other than the quasi-guilt for not living up to one's role as mindless cannon fodder. (What if they gave a war and nobody came?) But of course the government can still punish the protester for disobedience. Ignoring a true moral command, on the other hand, has all three full-featured effects.

Refusing to obey a command signals a rejection of a hegemonic relationship. One cannot be an employee of a company and at the same time defy the boss. One cannot be a soldier and not yield to the general. When the boss assigns a new project to you, dutifully getting to work is, to adapt Joyce's terminology, a *weak* imperative, since these are optional and acquired relationships. Ethics in general deals with relationships between humans as such, and one cannot shed his humanity. Or he can try but with devastating consequences. Our nature defines us, *causes* us formally, and we are enthralled to it hegemonically, too. To borrow from Korsgaard, if morality sometimes requires that one sacrifice his life in its name, then being immoral must be worse than death, and, now in my terms, losing one's identity as a human being is exactly that. (In her *Sources of Normativity*, Korsgaard arrives at the idea of a natural law ethics (without calling it such) through a tortured but not uninformative detour.) "You shall not kill" would then be a *strong* imperative from which there is no escape. That's why a violation of a natural duty we call a "sin," while it would not be a sin to quit one's job.[b]

A crime brings about guilt, shame, and punishment. Righteousness is a precept. A vice brings about shame and punishment. Virtue is a counsel. (A point relevant to political philosophy is that vices are not crimes; a drug user should perhaps be ashamed of himself and may suffer from ill-health, but he is not *guilty* and therefore not subject to punishment by the *state*.) And failure brings about punishment only. Success is its own reward and pleasure.

Eric Hoffer once said something strikingly vivid, though it somewhat misfired:

> It's disconcerting to realize that businessmen, generals, soldiers, men of action are less corrupted by power than intellectuals…
>
> You take a conventional man of action, and he's satisfied if you obey. But not the intellectual. He doesn't want you just to obey. He wants you to get down on your knees and praise the one who makes you love what you hate and hate what you love. In other words, whenever the intellectuals are in power, there's soul-raping going on.[8]

In the first place, Hoffer's got his archetypes wrong. The person who changes you this way is not an "intellectual" but a "priest." But even the priest scarcely tries to reform you. No one forces anyone to come to confession, and the priest is all but required to absolve upon a show of contrition. But Hoffer is right that moral reformation often insists that one begin to love what he presently hates and begin to hate what he presently loves. Violent criminals, sex fiends, and so on *should*, for justice to be done, be soul-raped.

Punishment is a kind of wrath that beats the sinner until he yells, broken, "Lord, save me! I want to be good." Rehabilitation is about turning the tables on a guy, showing him firsthand how his actions affected others. The pain to be inflicted can be considerable, though no permanent damage should be done. This of course can go too far, such that the forces of law and order instead become oppressive and evil. The human authorities are no angels. The concern of an alleged duty with a man's inner life even beyond mere external obedience can turn totalitarian. Winston in Orwell's *1984* was tortured until he "loved" Big Brother. The politically correct demand that we grovel for any dissent they don't like. "White guilt is quite literally the same thing as black power," says Shelby Steele, inculcated so that whites would "lose moral authority over everything having to do with race, equality, social justice, poverty, and so on."[9] An appeal to moral duty is a huge gun, not to be deployed lightly. The default attitude is live and let live.

Erich Fromm distinguishes between "authoritarian" and "humanistic" religions, condemning the former and generally lauding the latter:

> The essential element in authoritarian religion… is the surrender to a power transcending man. The main virtue of this type of religion is obedience, its cardinal sin is disobedience. Just as the deity is conceived as omnipotent or omniscient, man is conceived as being powerless and insignificant. … Humanistic religion, on the contrary, is centered around man and his strength. Man must develop his power of reason in order to understand himself, his relationship to his fellow men and his

> position in the universe. He must develop his powers of love for others as well as for himself and experience the solidarity of all living beings. His must have principles and norms to guide him in this aim.[10]

It's ironic that Fromm's "anti-authoritarian" "religion" is interspersed with so many "musts." Fromm completely ignores the crucial task of reforming criminals, psychopaths, perverts, and cruel abusers. A "humanistic" religion is for *humans*, but these miscreants are anything but; they are precisely *sub*humans who must be punished, including and especially for their own sake, lest they in their savagery tear apart their own souls. I'd have thought that a murderer who finds pleasure in his victims' suffering must go through a (hopefully) temporary stage where his *ill-directed* power must be reduced to nothing before he can cultivate his powers to do good. Complete surrender is indeed the hidden key. The word "Islam" comes from Arabic "submission" (to the will of God); submission to the natural law is equally appropriate. Religion *ought* to be authoritarian whenever a man's nature is twisted and wayward; it becomes humanistic only when his nature is healed and grace is bestowed on him. The Christian Church, consistent with its mission of being all things to all people, thus properly retains within itself both authoritarian and humanistic aspects. Fromm goes on, "God is not a symbol of power over man but of man's own power."[11] Well, first, God is not a symbol; He is a real thing. Second, "man's own power" can be either creative (for good) or destructive (for evil). If it is creative, then it is rather man who is a "symbol" of God, imitating Him. If, however, it is destructive, then the authorities of the world ought to slap him down.

The Catholic *Confiteor* goes like this: "I confess to almighty God… that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault…; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin… to pray for me to the Lord our God." The fundamental sins are internal, in thoughts and feelings, and it is those that need to be amended in the final analysis. "Sin is a word, deed, or desire against the eternal law," says St. Augustine. It is through penance that one's virtues are restored after sin, especially as God mends the heart wounded by sin. To illustrate, Jesus teaches: "But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. For out of the heart come evil thoughts – murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander."[12] He goes so far as to declare that "everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart."[13] And again, "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the

inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness."[14]

No one, the politically correct intone, shall impugn the "identity" of anyone from the "oppressed classes." (The "oppressor classes" are fair game.) But one's identity includes evil parts. One will not enter heaven with them even, and especially, if he can't imagine living without them. The Bible again illustrates the point: "And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life crippled than with two feet to be thrown into Gehenna."[15] And it's far better to perform this operation sooner than later.

Kreeft, in an attack on moral relativism, argues: "The teaching [is] that in order to be saved, to go to heaven, you need to repent. But you can't repent if you don't believe in sin to repent of, and you can't believe in sin if you don't believe in a real moral law, because sin means disobeying that. Moral relativism eliminates that law, thus sin, thus repentance, thus salvation."[16] Repentance can be of both metaphysical and moral evils, for the former it is a change of heart occasioned by the recognition of one's duties.

Sidgwick considers a judgement that "*X* ought to be done" as "a 'dictate' or 'precept' of reason" to be giving "an impulse or motive to action,"[17] but as I maintain, it in fact *destroys* the motives that incline one to act *contrary* to duty, if not once and for all with perfect efficiency, then at least in the long run upon a lifetime of practicing justice. This destruction is its proper effect – it's how it refashions the souls of men, hopefully for the better. The call of duty is true or ideal human nature or apotheosis or *form* forcibly impressing itself onto a "fallen human being" as "reluctant, recalcitrant, resistant" *matter*, as Korsgaard puts it.[18]

Call a desire that a person attempts to drive away, a *hollow* desire. What about desires one does not feel but wants to inflame, such as indeed charity for his kindred? To a desire that a person seeks to evoke through planning and execution, I refer as an *unfelt* desire. It is a bit like Pascal's remedy for atheism through his wager: one can, if we take him seriously, engender a genuine belief in God by "taking holy water, having Masses said, and so on." (The difference is that the wager aims to coerce the intellect which does not work, whereas duties coerce the will which does.) Regarding the "ethics of the New Testament," Hazlitt writes:

> We can, in large part, command our actions; but we cannot command our feelings. We cannot love all our fellow men simply because we think we ought to. Love for a few (usually members of our immediate family), affection and friendship for some, initial goodwill toward a wider circle, and the attempt constantly to discourage and suppress within ourselves incipient anger, resentment, jealousy, envy, and hatred, are the most that

> all but a very small number of us seem to be able to achieve.[19]

Isn't there an obvious contradiction? If we can "suppress hatred," thereby straightforwardly "commanding feelings," then perhaps we can cultivate charity, too. In fact, there is a reliable way to do the latter which consists in adhering to Christian justice, i.e., performing positive works of mercy, and not merely negatively abstaining from evil deeds. Even if charity requires divine grace, we can surely do our part. Dostoyevsky put it this way:

> Strive to love your neighbor actively and indefatigably. In as far as you advance in love you will grow surer of the reality of God and of the immortality of your soul. If you attain to perfect self-forgetfulness in the love of your neighbor, then you will believe without doubt, and no doubt can possibly enter your soul.[20]

Works of mercy are sacraments of charity; even more, as Nassim Taleb quips, "Love without sacrifice is like theft." They are (imperfect in the Kantian sense) duties of every Christian man. It would not be correct to call works of mercy "supererogatory," since they do not bind a man who is fully without grace at all and are duties and do not go beyond their call for a Christian. Still, natural duties are perfect and are always and at all times in force: it is never right to maim one's own soul, but it may be appropriate not to perform any specific work of mercy, especially given that charity that is inflamed in the heart through such works knows neither mean (as say, courage) nor upper bound (as say, bodily vigor). You have to consistently "not murder"; you are free to choose whether to feed any particular hungry person. In other words, a natural duty not to murder entails a corresponding natural right of another not to be murdered; but a Christian duty to feed the hungry does not entail a right of a hungry person to be fed. And Christians hold that good works will not be in vain, e.g., the song "Here I Am, Lord" features the lyrics of God promising the requisite grace: "I will break their hearts of stone, Give them hearts for love alone."

There are then three possible states for a man. The first, below nature, is one of violence (and deception) and hatred. The second is natural, of enlightened self-interest. The third is superhuman, indeed deiform, self-sacrificial charity, linked up with faith and hope. The first state leads to hell. Now it is man's nature, in the second state, to pursue happiness. But in hell there is neither happiness nor its pursuit but rather weeping and gnashing of teeth. Man is thus absolutely commanded to avoid self-destruction. This avoidance is less an end than a condition of having any ends at all; it is a state of the soul, of natural righteousness, normalcy, spiritual health. Still, if it is an end, then the strict fulfillment of perfect natural duties is a means to it. But there is

also the imperative to enter the third state which leads to heaven. Here the "duties of charity" are means to the cultivation of charity, to the increase in the holy light in the heart. They are owed to no one in particular, and at no particular time. Man is free to decide whom to love, when, in what way, and how much. He resolves for himself how godlike he wishes to become and what he is willing to sacrifice for this end.

Consider the idea of enforcing works of mercy legally. It's a nonstarter. In such a case, first, they would cease to be duties of *charity* because charity is by its nature voluntary and would mutate into duties of obedience to the powers that be from servile fear of punishment. Second, they would cease to be *duties* of charity because as duties, they are means to igniting love. If they are "enforced," this effect does not occur and so, as soon as the end is abolished, the means are rendered unnecessary. Fleischacker writes that in the premodern times, "acts of charity were opportunities for the display of two virtues: generosity on the part of the giver and humility on the part of the receiver."[21] "Almsgiving was understood as a means to redemption, and the existence of poor people was seen as an integral part of God's plan for human life."[22] The welfare state then is an evil phenomenon. It loots the taxpayers for the sake of assorted social parasites, yet since the state deals in aggression, and the money it extorts is not donated voluntarily, those who are pillaged cannot become metaphysically better as a result of the coercive transfers. The crucial difference between the pull of a Christian duty and the pull of a gun pointed at you is that only the former, and not the latter, can add to charity. Acting on a duty is an immediate restraint on freedom to pursue narrow happiness, but consistent with, or even is a use of, one's freedom to pursue true happiness.

The pain of duty is transcended through charity (or for natural duty, disinterestedness): you either live through pain by giving birth to love, or you die through pain by rejecting both love and duty (for natural duty you become a criminal).

To summarize, the spectrum of the chakras is natural spiritual (i.e., 2nd-level) light. (Hence materialists writhe in the abyss, unable to recognize their own gleam.) Charity, along with faith and hope, is supernatural 3rd-level light. When we gain charity (or, more precisely, when charity gains us), we do not of course become divinely good, but we imitate God. Charity is also a relation of friendship with someone. Insofar as disinterestedness and charity are such relations, the kingdom of God is between you and others; insofar as they are (natural or theological) virtues, the kingdom of God is within you; and insofar as charity is a metaphysical change in the very nature of the lovers, the kingdom is simply you and all those united by love. We defined true

happiness as the fusion of narrow happiness, virtue, and nature. An alternative definition is the combined luminance of all three levels of light: physical (which comprehends bodily health and power), spiritual, and divine. We are thus all advised to walk in the light.

The mind and heart are to be in harmony. If one does not approve (in the mind) of what he enjoys (in the heart), then he must rip the desires for the hollow unlawful pleasures from his soul. And if he does not enjoy the things he approves of, then he must on the contrary kindle the unfelt desires until he is happy with them. Of course, one's morals can be mistaken, in which case it's the intellect rather than the will that ought to change. Erring conscience binds, as we'll see, and that in itself is dangerous. Now to have a hollow desire whose satisfaction you do not seek under the influence of the apprehension of a duty is painful. This desire tugs at you and demands attention. The only permanent solution is fully to repress it. Conversely, to toil on an unfelt desire is continuously to pay the costs of an action without reaping the benefits which are pleasure, since there is no pleasure or satisfaction without a prior desire that can be satisfied. This, too, is a pain, and the only fix for it is for the requisite desire to arise.

Now it would seem that if Smith hates Jones, then Smith has a reason to try to harm Jones. And if Smith contrariwise loves Jones, then he has a reason to work zealously for Jones' sake, since the beloved is "another self," and their wills unite and their hearts indwell in each other through charity. Finally, if Smith is disinterested in regard to Jones, then he should be willing to use Jones for his own advantage and profit from his existence and actions within society as part of social cooperation, free market, etc.

But in each case, Smith would seem to receive his reward in full. Even in the second case of love, Smith freely rejoices in Jones' happiness. Whence then morality? The answer is that the causal relation between *feelings* toward others and *deeds* toward them goes both ways. Thus, Smith's hatred for Jones can prompt Smith to assault Jones. But assaulting Jones likewise deepens Smith's hatred. If Smith on the contrary "forced himself" to do good to Jones, then his hatred for Jones would likely diminish. Enough of such seemingly "unmotivated" good deeds, and Smith might mellow out as regards fellow men noticeably. Similarly, it's not just that charity toward neighbor inspires good deeds; but good deeds tend to increase one's charity, though not necessarily in an obvious fashion. Sidgwick observes, for example, that "a benefit tends to excite love in the agent toward the recipient of the benefit, no less than in the recipient toward the agent."[23] Both personal and disinterested love are virtues; for example, some people feel contempt for and cynicism toward mankind for various human foibles, the remedy for which is to struggle to improve the world. Christian morality

therefore demands that one grow in charity throughout his whole life. Again, a Christian may not feel any particular charity at first, but through holy works, this charity is sure to swell; that's how the world and human beings work. The motivation here is an understanding of one's grace-enhanced moral duty, not any desire. On the other hand, charity feeds on itself, so if the motivation for a good deed is 100% existing charity, moral progress will still occur. As we have seen, St. Thomas divides people into beginning, proficient, and perfect in virtue; here's the full quote:

> For at first it is incumbent on man to occupy himself chiefly with avoiding sin and resisting his concupiscences, which move him in opposition to charity: this concerns beginners, in whom charity has to be fed or fostered lest it be destroyed;
>
> in the second place, man's chief pursuit is to aim at progress in good, and this is the pursuit of the proficient, whose chief aim is to strengthen their charity by adding to it;
>
> while man's third pursuit is to aim chiefly at union with and enjoyment of God: this belongs to the perfect who "desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ."[24]

A man is naturally holy when he has no desires that contravene or pull him away from carrying out his natural moral duties, such as when not only is he never tempted to steal but even the thought of stealing never occurs to him; and a man is supernaturally holy when he does good to others with charity for them, rejoicing for their happiness that he creates. Duty on my understanding is done not for "duty's sake" but for charity's sake, to amplify its glow in one's heart. Kant was therefore onto something when he ascribed specifically moral significance to actions done on account of duty, since it is in such cases that desires are affected, and man improves metaphysically. The entire state of grace is the state of servitude to the world as a sacrament of growth in charity. St. Thomas ties charity to happiness at least in the next life: "he who possesses the more charity, will see God the more perfectly, and will be the more beatified."[25] Charity is indispensable for true happiness even in this life: God is called the vine and we the branches since it is through the vine that the hot light of love flows, nourishing us, and a dried-out branch is spiritually dead.

A desire for means M can arise from the desire for end E coupled with the belief that M is conducive to E. Desire S to provide for desire T that will emerge in the future can itself come about from T in conjunction with the awareness that one's personal identity is extended in time and that the future will be now soon enough. But in our case, the unfelt desire to be engendered springs up from the considerations of duty unconnected with any more foundational desire such as E or T. It's

an unequivocal (in this case, divine) command to obtain a desire, period.

Certainly doing good to others because "one wants to be a loving person" is a partially defective motivation. It is reflexive and even selfish, being occupied with one's own dispositions. If it is simply about having a pleasing though false self-image, it seems entirely futile. But if one actually *is not* a loving person but is sincerely trying to become one, this may well be good enough.

It is permissible to sacrifice one's own lesser present narrow happiness for greater future happiness, insofar as it increases happiness on the whole. It is permissible to trade off one's own physical good for moral or metaphysical good and perhaps on rare occasions vice versa, as per on one's calculations. If one loves another, then the lover may sacrifice his lesser pleasure for the greater pleasure of the beloved depending also on the intensity of the love, since in such a case the sacrifice is partially illusory as the intertwinement of the lovers' wills causes them to feel to an extent each other's happiness. (As a corollary, if one "loves mankind" even with some disinterested benevolence, it may pay him to forfeit his own welfare for the "greater good.") It is in capitalist complementarity and Christian charity that we find the substantial resolution of the conflicts between one's own good and that of others. But under no circumstances may any man sacrifice his metaphysical, moral, or physical good for the sake of another's any such goods no matter how plentiful without some suitable compensation (including through a loving communion). It is better for a man to be saved and let the whole world burn in hell than himself be damned while everyone else rejoices in heaven; this point stands even though we never actually have to make such a choice, as our mutual salvation is intimately linked. Similarly, each man is tasked with reaching *his own* happiness and may never deviate from this one overriding end. A man of course seeks his happiness ineluctably, but he often does not, though he ought to, seek his own *greatest* happiness, not necessarily just in this life but also in the life to come, to the best of his ability. Both psychological and ethical "eudaemonism" are then true when rightly understood. The demands of morality and pursuit of narrow happiness often diverge, but there is convergence between morality and true happiness. The less ambitious thesis is that acting morally which means attaining metaphysical goodness which in turn yields lightsome nature promotes true happiness. The more ambitious thesis is that whatever promotes one's greatest true happiness, which consists in the combination of metaphysical, moral, and physical goods, is by that fact required.

Peter Singer, for example, schemes to persuade us to donate more money to charities to alleviate famines, etc. He adopts an intuition (U)

that “if it is in our power to prevent something bad from happening, without thereby sacrificing anything of comparable moral importance, we ought, morally, to do it.”[26] (Alternatively, he uses a form of act utilitarianism to ground this premise.) Thus, if on my way to work I encounter a child drowning in a shallow pond, then I’m duty-bound to save him even at the expense of getting my clothes wet and being late, because a great good can be achieved at a very low cost. From this it follows that I must likewise save a starving African by donating to charities, etc. Neither the fact that the drowning child is near and the African is far away, nor the fact that the duty depends on whether and how much other people contribute too has any bearing on the moral situation. Now there are innumerable objections that can be brought to bear on Singer’s thesis; here I’ll only attack (U) directly. I reject this intuition in an unmodified form and unless it is rightly understood. If a sacrifice of some narrow happiness or physical good, such as effort or money, can redound *to the benefactor* in the form of improvement in his nature or metaphysical good such as greater charity for fellow men or for God, then this exchange may be advantageous according to his own appraisal. If not, then ethics, or at least my ethics, forbids the sacrifice as harming one’s true happiness. It is at least plausible that helping someone near whom you can see and interact with adds to one’s charity much more than helping someone far away (hey, I didn’t design humans). This is a crucial point: simply throwing money at some problem will not necessarily make anyone a better man. If it does not, then the sacrifice is vicious and morally wrong. As per natural morality, it is permissible to let the child drown, just as it is permissible not to act as a Good Samaritan in any other case; this secures the consistency of our judgments. As per Christian morality, whether to save either the Drowning Child or the Starving African depends on whether the rescuer will grow in theological virtues or some other goods as a result. And this is something that each man must determine for himself; or rather it is up to him to discern the will of God as to which holy cause he should devote his energies to. We’ve been soaking in Christianity for over 2,000 years, and this prevents Singer (and his disciple Peter Unger) from distinguishing properly between nature and grace. Singer preaches that we don’t really “need” our own prosperity; he wants us to renounce the world. Well, maybe he doesn’t need it, but I do, and so do most other people. Singer commands “us” to enslave ourselves – and our posterity – for the rest of our lives to foreign wretches, to some insatiable maw that devours resources without even bothering to say thank you. “We” must allegedly sacrifice our own lives and ends to serve the dark Starving African demon-god. In the name of morality, Singer seeks to justify exploitation and oppression of the productive classes by sundry useless eaters. This, I submit, is a recipe for underwriting mutual hatred in the

world, not for attaining any greatest good for the greatest number. St. Paul did not in vain write that "If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing."[27]

This reasoning, by the way, indicates how important it is to discover the correct normative moral theory. Suppose one decides that he should be a utilitarian. He will sacrifice all or most of his own ends in the manner Singer and Unger prescribe for the "greater good." Then on the metaethics herein, his desires for his own welfare including the ostensibly innocent ones are altogether unlawful for interfering with his new utilitarian duties. He must therefore suppress and eradicate them, since he can't reasonably contend with constant temptations to pursue his own pleasures and live like a human being. Instead, under the influence of utilitarianism he is to become an undead soulless shadow who lives only to "serve" and whose lifeforce is to feed his savage masters. Some views of morality, Scheffler says, consider it to be requiring "radical self-transcendence" which "is a standpoint that one attains by renouncing any distinctive attachment to oneself, and by acting instead from a thoroughly selfless concern for all."[28] Certainly natural morality as I understand it requires no such thing: the strictures against stealing or lying are hardly radical. Christian morality may indeed be more hardcore: "Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.'"[29] But again since grace is not law, no generalizations regarding this matter can be made. It does not, for example, entail utilitarianism.

To put it another way, in a piece of internet wisdom, "The rewards of feeding chipmunks one afternoon at the park are far greater than feeding a billion malnourished sub-Saharans in Africa every year." This statement is by and large true and should be heeded in the construction of any reasonable ethic.

According to my theory, to contrast it with utilitarianism, how do we evaluate the act of pushing the fat man in front of a runaway trolley to stop it and thereby save five people who would otherwise be run over? The all-round consequences seem good, but the act violates the principle of double effect and in addition the fat man's natural right not to be aggressed against. It's a pretty cold-blooded thing to do, to be sure. The question for us is whether the act will make you a metaphysically better person. The murder of the fat man is a hateful act and will diminish your charity. (Indeed it seems to be a *mortal* sin whose deadliness consists precisely in destroying charity completely.) But the rescue of the five (or of five million if you feel like playing with the numbers) might stoke your charity. What is the overall effect? There is probably no objective answer, so it seems that you would have to

resolve this dilemma for yourself as it occurred.

For some reason, this elementary dynamics, long well-understood in the Christian world, seems to escape modern moral philosophers, a lot of whom are clueless secularists.[c] For a dissent, we can refer to Hume:

> Celibacy, fasting, penance, mortification, self-denial, humility, silence, solitude, and the whole train of monkish virtues; for what reason are they everywhere rejected by men of sense, but because they serve to no manner of purpose; neither advance a man's fortune in the world, nor render him a more valuable member of society; neither qualify him for the entertainment of company, nor increase his power of self-enjoyment?
>
> We observe, on the contrary, that they cross all these desirable ends; stupefy the understanding and harden the heart, obscure the fancy and sour the temper. We justly, therefore, transfer them to the opposite column, and place them in the catalogue of vices.[30]

I've made my general point, however. Consider that one theory behind the 9/11/2001 attacks on the NYC Trade Center towers was that the terrorists, if such there were, sought revenge for the bellicose foreign policy of the U.S. government in the Middle East. That would serve to *explain* their actions: we are familiar with vengeance as a powerful galvanizing force. But that hardly manages to *justify* the attack morally, *even if* the U.S. foreign policy was indeed calamitous and unjust. We might argue that the American people and the U.S. government are distinct groups, elections or not, and it is futile to blame the people for the deeds of the state. Killing innocents is usually wrong, no matter the cause; thus, perhaps the attack on the NYC towers was unjust, but the attack on the Pentagon as a government property and U.S. war asset was just (as jus in bello). If the terrorists had been more moral, they would have sunk a few of the imperial aircraft carriers instead: no one really cares about *those* technological terrors. (If they had wanted to be *heroic*, they would have blasted the Federal Reserve and the IRS.) Thymological explanations are not the same as moral justifications precisely because economics takes values as a given, and ethics does not: it is permissible in ethics to call some values evil and not worthy of satisfaction.

We can see now that the Humean theory of motivation is false because besides the desire-driven motivation to *satisfy* desires, as regards metaphysical goods, there is also the duty-driven motivation to *lose* or *gain* desires. A desire is potency; an *action* satisfies it bringing (narrow) pleasure or joy; a natural *duty* extirpates it bringing only a clean slate in which good desires can take root. You don't of course

want to slip into undue moral ardor and start repressing innocent desires; this is a sign of serious madness – do that enough times, and you'll disappear as a human being and turn into a joyless robot.

Joyce propounds a version of non-Humeanism in which he distinguishes between subjective reasons recognized by actual persons and objective reasons that would be acknowledged by an ideal version of an actual person, such as someone who deliberated flawlessly with all true beliefs and no false beliefs.[31] Suppose tomorrow a nasty car crash awaits me. I know nothing of it and hence have no subjective reasons right now to prevent it. But my ideal self foresees it, and so I have an objective reason to strive to escape the disaster. Of course, there *are* no perfectly informed and rational counterparts of us. An objective reason can be discerned only in hindsight: if I had known that I'd break my tooth on a cherry pit, I wouldn't have bought cherries at the supermarket yesterday. But at that point, in the past, it is no longer any kind of reason to do anything since deliberation with reasons regards future actions. Why then postulate objective reasons? Am I to curse the heavens that I was not forewarned? Again, if I am reaching for a cup of coffee unaware of the fact that it is poisoned, I may have a subjective reason to drink and objective reason to refrain from drinking. If Smith who is playing the role of my ideal self and who knows that the coffee is poisonous sees me go for the cup and warns me, he has a subjective reason to save my life. Once I've learned what's going on, I, too, then have a subjective reason for not drinking. Objective reasons might be used to judge the truth of a counterfactual "If I had known the coffee had poison in it, I wouldn't have drunk it." Suppose that shortly after finishing the coffee, I was planning to commit suicide. Did I still have an objective reason not to drink, or did the poisoner do me a favor? The answer may avail in a criminal trial, for example. In any case, Joyce's point is that this twist to HUM is compatible with his error theory of morality. For our purposes it should be emphasized that my version of non-Humeanism is different from Joyce's.

It is of course not the ambition of this study to provide a detailed answer to the question "Why be just?" The general solution is that it is one's true and not just narrow happiness that is one's proper object of concern. Certain Christian writers, Sidgwick notes, treated "the *moral* unbeliever as a fool who sacrifices his happiness both here and hereafter."[32] Presumably, such a man repudiates his self-interest *here* for the sake of duty; yet his righteousness fails to win him a heavenly bounty *in the hereafter* due to his lack of faith, or simply from the unbeliever's own point of view. This opinion entails that the only purpose of self-sacrifice is to merit a reward in the life of the world to come, not for any benefits in this life. But that is a narrow view of duty. For duties are not arbitrary challenges devised by God as if life were a

game – challenges which, if overcome, will garner you the crown of laurel, though they may do this, too. The unbeliever may be rational trading off a smaller part (narrow happiness) for a greater whole (true happiness) by complying with his duties. In a small society, that one ought to be just is easy to prove, since justice is so tightly yoked to one's own self-interest, but precisely for that reason it is less important. In a large society, justice is crucial but is harder to prove from the axioms of human nature. Recall the four fundamental relations introduced in Chapter 2: hostility, equality, hierarchy, and complementarity. For hostility, the *fewer* people you relate to in this way the better. For equality there is mutual indifference, so it *doesn't matter* how many people you are equal to. For hierarchy, the more people are under you, though not over you, the better. This means that relating only to *some but not others* will be beneficial. It is only at the highest grade, complementarity, that you want to relate to *as many* people as possible (within the economy). The more you strike out to dominate others in opposition to the social nature of man, the more degraded your own soul becomes. It is true that, as Joyce observes, even crooked mafiosi "may be happy, may have loving relations with friends and family, and may gain satisfaction in their projects."[33] But the mafioso, by being an enemy of society (i.e., of everyone *but* his friends and family), is denying himself his full metaphysical perfection and through that, true happiness.

Interpersonal justice makes you a treasured part of the cosmic harmony, the enduring hymn of man's striving and mastering the world, the romance of the smoothly functioning progressing market economy. It is human nature to aspire to this kind of kinetic, thrilling, flowing tranquility where the inner peace within society is complemented with outer commotion. As factors of production including labor interlock, so do souls who are enlivened and find meaning in the participation within the whole greater than they. Injustice likens you to sand in the gears. You will not be content until you find your niche, your rightful place in the universe.

Footnotes

a. Cf. the Humean theory of *reasons* which says that if I *desire* φ, then I have a *motivating* reason to do whatever is necessary to attain φ (if prudence concurs), and that this is the only kind of reason to do anything. In my anti-Humeanism, the motivation of *duty* is paired with *normative* reasons.

b. Joyce, as an error theorist, of course denies, as I affirm, that strong categorical imperatives exist.

c. My guess is that our 20th century of socialism, genocide, total global war, economic destructionism, statolatry, unimagined cruelty crushed everyone's spirits including the philosophers' and drove many to despair. God is not dead, but He is stunned. Roojen (2015) in a perfunctory discussion of "supernaturalism," in the throes of political correctness, refers to God as "she or he"; it is clear that he couldn't tell God from a hole in the ground.

Endnotes

1. Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, 1219ª30.

2. *CE*, "Duty."

3. St. Thomas, *Meditations*, 13-4.

4. Watson, "Free Agency," 210.

5. Lillehammer, "Smith," 192.

6. Williams, "Internal and External Reasons" in his *Luck*, Ch. 8.

7. Burgess, "Against Ethics" in Joyce, *World*, 11.

8. Interview with Eric Sevareid, 1967.

9. Steele, *White Guilt*, New York: HarperCollins, 2006, 96.

10. Fromm, *Analysis*, 164-5.

11. Ibid., 172.

12. Mt 15:18-19.

13. Mt 5:28.

14. Mt 23:27-28.

15. Mk 9:45.

16. Kreeft, *Refutation*, 20.

17. Sidgwick, *Methods*, 34.

18. Korsgaard, *Sources*, 4.

19. Hazlitt, *Foundations*, 350.

20. Dostoyevsky, *Brothers*, 58.

21. Fleischacker, *Short History*, 49.

22. Ibid., 64.

23. Sidgwick, *Methods*, 239.

24. *ST*, II-II, 24, 9.

25. *ST*, I, 12, 6.

26. Singer, “Famine,” 231.

27. 1 Cor 13:3.

28. Scheffler, *Human Morality*, 120.

29. Mt 16:24.

30. Hume, *Enquiry*, Section 9, Part 1.

31. Joyce, *Myth*, Ch. 3.

32. Sidgwick, *Methods*, 171n1.

33. Joyce, *Myth*, 132.

4. Objectivity of Ethics

The fact that society punishes theft is an objective fact to a thief contemplating a crime. But the sense of objectivity in ethics is rather that the proposition "theft is wrong" is true objectively, being provable by human reason, and holds absolutely for all people and all times. More specifically, by objectivity I mean heart-independence or independence of the truth values of moral propositions from one's feelings. Of course, that one feels approval or anger or guilt is itself an objective fact, but his feelings cannot by themselves make any moral proposition true or false. It's further the case for both two objectivists and two subjectivists Smith and Jones that Smith can say that "*X* is good" and Jones that "*X* is bad" who will thereby contradict or "negate" each other; but only for the objectivist, one of them will be right and the other wrong; for the subjectivist, they may well both be right. Subjectivism need not entail relativism if everyone in the entire world as a matter of fact (though not necessarily) judges *X* to be good. Maybe in a certain society ice cream is universally in demand. In practice, however, human diversity makes these things go with one another.

Sidgwick affirms that happiness is "an end absolutely prescribed by reason." It is true that each man seeks happiness, or true happiness in my terms, necessarily; doing so is indeed his very nature. But to point out such a general fact is to say almost nothing about *ethics* which deals with just relations between men. The specifically ethical objectivity is more particular.

Physical goods are of course subjective and relative. This subjectivism is still cognitive: the fact that I like ice cream is a reason for me to say that the proposition "Ice cream is a physical good (for me)" is true. Emotivism as a theory that our discourse on goods is not truth-apt but instead consists of mere expressions of attitudes is false even for physical goods. Subjective value is ordinal not cardinal; it consists in ranking alternatives for choice: first, second, third. There is no measure of value or unit of "utility" other than a recursive one that the value of end E_1 is measured by the fact that ends E_2-E_n *that also had value* were sacrificed or forgone in order to attain E_1. The recursion has to end somewhere, which is why we must admit that some (though certainly not the best) things in life are free. In a manner of speaking, economists are reality checkers (or trickster imps?), asking in response to "I want that," "What would you be willing to give up for this thing's sake?" By identifying end E_2 that would have been picked without E_1, end E_3 that would have replaced E_1 and E_2, and so on, we obtain *value*

scales. Yet though we insist that the neglected ends are used to assess the subjective urgency or importance of the chosen end, we deny that the latter is in any way *equal* to the former. Indeed, it is superior.

Thomson worries about the problem "Alice's new Mercedes is a good car; chocolate tastes good. Which is better, Alice's Mercedes or chocolate? It's a crazy question."[1] It certainly is not. That thing is (subjectively) better (for you) that you choose at the expense of the other. If you pick a ride in the Mercedes over a box of chocolates, then there you go: the ride is better. It is choice that ranks values. It is true on the other hand that since neither the Mercedes nor the chocolate are metaphysical goods, neither is objectively better than the other, but only because neither is objectively good at all.

Thomas Nagel babbles something about "objective reasons" and objective desires. Though his book is mostly nonsense, perhaps an argument can be extracted from it. It might look something like the following:

1. Any practical judgement assertible from a personal standpoint must be assertible, with the same content, from an impersonal standpoint. In other words, by being assertible from an impersonal standpoint, a subjective reason can be transmuted into an objective reason.
2. Practical judgments from a personal standpoint have motivational content.
   Therefore,
3. Practical judgments from an impersonal standpoint have motivational content.

Suppose that I assert "I have a reason to eat a sandwich." That's a subjective judgment from my own personal point of view. It has "motivational content" because it showcases my desire to eat a sandwich. According to this, however, it follows that the proposition "Chernikov has a reason to eat a sandwich," when asserted by some Smith, is true. But this, being a mere rephrasing of the original situation, must by that fact also have motivational content. As a result, it is apparently the case that just as I have a reason to act for my sake, so Smith, too, finds himself with a reason to act for my sake, because my reason allegedly compels Smith. Individual "ends are common rational objects of pursuit for everyone," says Nagel.[2]

He compares murkily the multiplicity of persons with the multiplicity of time periods in one's life. Failing to impersonalize a reason manifests, we are told, "dissociation" from the idea that I am just one person among many, just as failing to be prudent indicates dissociation from the fact that now is just one moment among many. Of course, the past, present, and future selves are unified by being

numerically identical to each other; it's (at least almost) the same self. Therefore, explaining prudential concern with the future is unproblematic: as long as a man seeks his own happiness, he will perforce have to promote the satisfaction of his future desires. (In addition, as we have seen, practically *all* desires one exerts himself on can only be fulfilled in a more or less distant future.) But the selves of different people are separate. The natural principle of unity between persons is their complementarity of various kinds in which case a human interaction is mutually beneficial (as a trade or exchange of goods) without a trace of altruism. The supernatural principle of such unity is charity in which case the lover's lesser sacrifice is compensated *to him* by the greater profit of the beloved by virtue of their spiritual union, again without altruism. Altruism is an irrational surrogate for these things. Hence the analogy fails.

Nagel has muddied the waters considerably. For remember that *X* is a physical good for me if and only if I enjoy it and it ought to be. And it ought to be only if I have chosen it usually at the expense of less valued goods. Those other goods that I have set aside in order to obtain *X* ought not to be and so are *not* physical goods *despite* being loved. But for a second party the situation is not the same. True, *X* is still cherished by me. But the person choosing between *X* and other goods is now different. It is Smith. Smith has his own value scales which are different from mine. It may be that he esteems my happiness so much that he will assist me at obtaining *X*. But he does not have to act or choose this way. He may choose some *Y* such that it will be precisely *X*-for-me that will be set aside, ought not to be, and hence turn out not to be a physical good for Smith. If I have a reason to do *X*, this means that by paying the costs of doing *X*, I will reap some benefits of *X* and the benefits outweigh the costs, resulting in psychic profit. But my attraction to *X* does not necessarily give Smith any reason to bring about *X*. For if he does, then I will still profit, indeed more than before; but, since all the benefits will go to me and all the costs to Smith, the poor guy will lose. And one would normally have no reason to incur (psychic or monetary) losses. It is not "solipsism" to refrain from showering random strangers with free gifts at one's own expense. Nagel's error then is thinking that my judgments just by virtue of being written "impersonally" and without indexical terms have any latent power to motivate my neighbors. That need not be the case, and my choosing *X* does not entail that any other person is bound in servitude to me to effectuate *X*. In addition, individual interests often compete directly. If I and Smith are rival businessmen, then Smith may well be hoping that my plans to invent a better mousetrap will go awry. Smith then may frankly be desiring that I *fail* to attain *X*. Unless altruism is a synonym for charity, it seems like slavery to me.

On the other hand, humans are objective and absolute goods: they exist and ought to be loved by everyone by virtue of the sort of things they are. Likewise, morality as principles for dealing with metaphysical goods too is objective. Whatever makes a man metaphysically better, whatever causes the fire of charity to burn brighter is required or at least praiseworthy; whatever leaves this fire intact is permissible; whatever dims it or blots it out altogether is forbidden. There is a fundamental difference between law which protects charity and is objective and grace which enhances charity and is subjective, as in uniquely customized to each person such that each soul ascends in its own way. Sin, and punishment, is the same for all; glory is peculiar to each. Below I mostly seek to attack subjectivism for the moral law.

4.1. Simple subjectivism

We can distinguish between *observer* and *agent* moral subjectivism. In observer subjectivism, if Smith disapproves of Jones' doing *X*, then Jones' doing *X* is by that fact immoral ("for everyone"), even if Jones himself approves of *X*. Observer subjectivism is absolutist and therefore apparently self-contradictory. For agent subjectivism, Smith's judgment is extraneous; he "should" mind his own business. Only the attitude of the agent, the person doing the act to be evaluated morally, matters. Thus, if Jones approves of *X*, then *X* is morally good "for Jones," though if Smith would disapprove of doing the same *X*, then it would be morally bad "for Smith." Each man's "poison" is morally good "for him." Agent subjectivism is on the contrary relativist.

What matters for the determination of whether *X* is moral, observer subjectivism says, is whether I like or dislike *X*. But for one, my tastes can shift with time. They are fundamentally *arbitrary*; there is neither truth nor permanence to them, nor should there be, since lawful preferences, unlike thoughts expressing propositions, are neither true nor false, neither rational nor irrational. But without the law constraining ambition, all preferences are Ok, and morality turns into personal fancy. There is no difference on subjectivism between "moral" *approval* and "physical" *enjoyment*; the meanings of both terms are identical: it's whatever pleases me.

Further, apparently one need not know anything about *X* to tell whether or not it is moral. The moralist must instead examine me. Indeed, I have the plenary power to lay down the moral law. The content of the law is whatever I want it to be. It literally is irrelevant what *X* is; I can make it moral or immoral on my own whim. Presumably, since other people are interested in moral philosophy, they will need to attend carefully to my immediate urges. They have to keep asking me what I want and revere my pronouncements as the last word

on morality. Both the scratching of my finger and the destruction of the whole world (as per Hume's example) will be moral, as long as I personally find gratification in it. "So, Chernikov expressed his taste for chicken wings a few days ago," the wise philosophers, prophets, and saints will be discussing at the latest gathering. "In order to be holy, then, we, too, must eat chicken wings *and enjoy it*." Is this opinion really to be taken seriously? Suppose I am superstitious and believe that looking at the sky on Tuesdays is bad luck. I dislike looking at the sky on Tuesdays. Amazingly, looking at the sky on Tuesdays is now morally wrong and *everyone* ought to avoid doing so. Suppose further that I up and die. Massive confusion will be introduced into society. Will the discipline of ethics disappear? Will the living no longer have any guidance on morality? If you think this kind of ethical self-deification is ridiculous, look no further than R.M. Hare who considered that by proposing "*X* is wrong," one issued a command, "one that was addressed to everyone and that applied to all actions of a certain sort."[3] All, apparently, simply must obey one Mr. Hare, or else. (I agree that it does entails a command or universal prescription, but one issued not by any man of his own implausible authority but by reason itself that is aware of natural law for human beings.[a])

Arrington is another absolutist subjectivist, combining what he calls "conceptual relativism" with moral absolutism. Sentences like "it is wrong to lie" are not for him substantive moral rules; they are part of his (or as he insists on calling it, "our") "moral grammar" that interdefines wrongness and lying – lying as wrong, and wrongness as instantiated by lying. Each person speaks only one moral language, and morality is relative to his grammatical concepts which are "beyond proof and beyond refutation." Arrington's thesis is paradoxical: on the one hand, "no concept of morality can be demonstrated to be superior or inferior to another"; on the other, faced with an alien culture, "we may think their so-called moral behavior decidedly immoral." Again, on the one hand, concepts "may be rejected without error or irrationality"; on the other, those who do not subscribe to "our" concepts do not have even have a morality at all; they are "subhuman" and may have to be "eradicated" in an "open conflict, perhaps war." It does not occur to Arrington that they may be superhuman instead. Certainly I agree that moral subhumans exist and are liable to be subdued by violence, but this is too much. Arrington denies that the rules he himself likes which "aim at preserving the integrity and autonomy of persons" are objectively true; at the same time, his, Arrington's, morals are declared particularly correct simply by virtue of being his.[4] It's a far-fetched mess.

Under objectivism, injustice is to be hated. The feelings follow reason. Under subjectivism, whatever I disapprove of is, again, by that

very fact unjust. Suppose I see Smith robbing Jones. I personally like sandwiches and dislike car crashes. But why should I care about Jones? Who is he to me? He's just a stranger; the whole thing is none of my business. Why waste any emotions on this event? And what am I even supposed to dislike here? There is a transfer of money from Jones to Smith, though admittedly under threat of coercion. What, seemingly, is the big deal? Under such circumstances, I must conclude that the robbery is not unjust. It is permissible to judge the assassination of Julius Caesar as morally significant, but since that episode is unlikely to excite any feelings in anyone today, the observer subjectivist, now feeling neither approval nor disapproval of it, cannot express an opinion on it.

The moral law for a citizen states: whatever is not explicitly forbidden is permitted, and very few things are forbidden. (The law for a government bureaucrat or cop is different: it states that whatever is not compulsory is implicitly forbidden, and almost everything is forbidden; this is the essence of the "rule of law": playing strictly by the book.) The moral law then prohibits 10 things; the decision which, out of the 1,000,000 things it permits, you want to do it leaves to you. Observer subjectivism inverts this understanding: I don't enjoy a huge variety of things, so it would seem that the few things I like are right, and the vast number of things I spurn are by that fact wrong.

Fundamental moral law is also exceedingly simple and accessible even to children; thus, the undoubtedly salubrious command "you shall not kill" is a single sentence consisting of just four one-syllable words. Moreover, abiding by this law is unproblematic: how hard really is it for an average man to abstain from murder all his life? "Not killing" people takes no thought or planning; it's a background condition upon which any acting occurs. But human actions can be arbitrarily complex and difficult. Take the writing of a modern computer operating system, for example: it's a task that requires hundreds of skilled engineers working for years in close cooperation with thousands. (The accompanying natural duty here may be "honest work for honest pay," not debug this software.) This again suggests that morality is about human *duties* not human *actions*.

Morality then is normally short and sweet and easy to comply with. Keeping the moral law brings *freedom* defined as permission to pursue both virtue and narrow happiness. Simply put, moral wisdom and disinterestedness / charity (externally) keep you out of prison. But the pursuit of physical goods is different. Let's say my end is building a personal computer. I have formed a plan of how to do this: which parts to buy, where, and at what prices, how to assemble the parts, how to install the operating system, and so on. Now I must *execute the plan*. And that's the final step: I *build* the computer; likewise, I *drive* to the store; I

read philosophy. Natural morality works differently. It says rather: do *not* kill, do *not* steal, do *not* bear false witness. Once these duties are discharged, one is free to do anything, such as indeed build the computer. And to do so one needs *power* defined (see Section 1.3) as the ability to bring about good consequences of acting. By confusing metaphysical goods with physical goods, one affirms that might makes right. On objectivism, on the other hand, right is right and does not guarantee might: a perfectly just man may be quite unable to build a computer, due for example to having no experience with such things.

Roojen objects that agent subjectivism "endorses the wrong moral verdicts whenever sufficiently bad agents have commitments relevant to morality."[5] But the situation is actually much worse than this: the phrases "bad agent" and "villain" lose both the *referents* and *meaning* all at once. Under agent subjectivism, I can say, "classical music is good, and rap music is bad (for me)." But it would be absurd, at least to some extent, for me to call an otherwise unidentified rap music lover, "villain." Recall that I would not appreciate the bartender's contempt for my choice of a "poison," let alone him branding me morally evil. How then can I call Attila the Hun a villain? He simply likes the things that I happen not to like. On subjectivism, my indignation is glaringly inappropriate and senseless. Attila's cruelty is merely a *consumer good* for him, as innocent as Coca-Cola. He should then have every right to enjoy it without my or anyone else's interference. The market economy should satisfy both the preference for soda and the preference for murder with equal eagerness (of course it already does this by efficiently supplying governments with their monstrous weapons of war). However, nobody seriously envisages morality this way.

If, on subjectivism, metaphysical goods are completely indistinguishable from physical goods, ethics collapses into economics or prudential calculations. Any prudent action is moral; any moral action is prudent; any imprudent action is immoral; any immoral action is imprudent. This leads to strange consequences. The more personal desires you successfully quench, the more good deeds you do and the more just you become. Eating a sandwich becomes a morally praiseworthy act. Rich people then by definition will be holier than poor people. Socialist despots who starve their own people while living in luxury themselves must be the best kind of folks, while their victims are positively evil. If they want to eat, then that is moral for them. But they have no food, so they can be accused of not exercising their souls with pious acts. If such a person dies from starvation, it is not the body that perishes but the soul. The victims of socialist famines must be hellbound. "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no

drink…'"[6] On subjectivism, Jesus would rather have said, "You were hungry but did not eat," etc. which would implausibly be grounds for condemnation. A man who cuts himself shaving would normally be called imprudent; under subjectivism, he is instead morally corrupt. Jack the Ripper liked to kill; the more people he killed, the saintlier he grew; his every murder must have been a work of mercy through which his character step by step improved. A man devotes his life to helping the poor and sinners despite toil and hardship; a subjectivist replies cynically that he "really" just profited directly from this allegedly "morally" exemplary life; maybe he just relished the company of incarcerated ruffians (whom he was trying to reform). One shoots a man in Reno just to watch him die, as Johnny Cash sang; if the killer enjoyed the show, should he be praised for his noble deed?

Let Smith hate broccoli. When given some broccoli to eat, he will chop it up and throw it into trash. But Smith also hates Jones. Upon meeting Jones, Smith also chops him up and throws the bloody remains into the trash. Under subjectivism, how can the two actions differ morally?

Smith wants to each a sandwich. That is his *end*. He then obtains the *means* to the end: he buys bread, meat, veggies; he contrives a plan of making and consuming the sandwich. The value of the means is imputed from the value of the end. The phrase "the end does not justify the means" suggests that the profit in terms of narrow happiness need not justify resorting to *criminal* means. On the other hand, as Rothbard pointed out, *only* the end can justify the means: why incur the costs of acquiring the means in the first place, unless they serve an end that is valued more than they cost? Since on agent subjectivism there is no such thing as an objective crime, profit sanctions any means. Jones covets his aunt's inheritance. There is nothing wrong with the end (on any theory). But, on subjectivism, no means to any end is itself objectively judgeable. So, Jones knocks off his aunt to capture the money. The murderous means has utility, having obtained it from the good end, and is therefore itself moral.

Harman believes that morality is relative to the moral demands one "accepts."[7] But on subjectivism, why indeed accept *any* alleged demands? An objective ethic is objective because it can be proven to all reasonable beings. But a subjective ethic is just a preference. Why then impose a duty on oneself? Why bind oneself with "morality" and thereby constrict one's own powers? I do not say, "I ought to eat sushi." I eat sushi if I enjoy it and refrain from eating it if I do not. Why must I "accept" the principle "I ought not to kill"? What if in the near future I will *feel* like killing someone? Won't my "morality" interfere with satisfying my desires? It seems irrational on subjectivism to place myself under such a liability. And of course, the demand has no authority over

me, anyway. What I bind, I can unbind. If the morality I presently accept demands that I abstain from killing, but I am foreseeing profit in the killing, how should this conflict be adjudicated? Is it a matter of the strongest preference winning? If I do proceed to kill, won't violating my subjective constitution make me feel guilty? Surely, it is best never to acquire one in the first place. Harman does not bother so much as to define "morality" or tell us how its "demands" differ from a random urge to be weighed on an equal footing with all other factors.

"It would be morally wrong of *P* to *D* has to be understood as elliptical for a judgment of the form, in relation to moral framework *M*," our author goes on.[8] Once again this assimilates morality to economic choices wherein *P* dislikes *D* because it does not fit his lifestyle *L*. (Harman does not define the mysterious term "moral framework." Is it my "personal morality," a sort of code of honor I have adopted and live by? If *D* = "murder is wrong" is in accord with my *M*, then the only intuitive way of defining *M* is as "the moral framework in which murder is wrong." The circularity is obvious and vicious.) "It is wrong for *P* to murder" is then an identical in style proposition to "*P* dislikes sushi." Harman does argue that it is possible for *P* not to realize that *D* is contrary to his own *M*. But it is equally possible that *P* is unaware that, e.g., sushi is fattening and hence contrary to his own prizing of health in his *L*. This refinement can't salvage the hopeless confusion between metaphysical and physical goods.

If a relativist (agent) subjectivist becomes suspicious of his doctrine, he might be tempted to convert into an absolutist (observer) subjectivist. On subjectivism, it is impossible to distinguish true consumer goods like pumpkin pies from deliverances of morality, such as "murder is wrong." Recall that on relativism, murder may be wrong "for you" but not necessarily "for me." An absolutist "moral fanatic" who happens to revile pumpkin pies might swing the other way and make the opposite to relativism mistake: he might (falsely) decide that eating pumpkin pies is immoral and deserves punishment. His cruel fury will be unjustly unleashed upon every innocent person. Thus, there are worse things than relativism, specifically getting your absolute morality wrong. Claims that a given duty is part of *the* objective morality must be rigorously proven, lest one decides that the delirious fancies of his own mind are the true higher standard according to which all moral systems are to be judged, thereby viciously forcing his arbitrary values onto other human beings. Lew Rockwell notes perceptively that the political Left in the U.S. is (in 2017) morally absolutist:

> For example, when it declares "transgender" persons to be the new oppressed class, everyone is expected to stand up and salute. Left-liberals do not argue that support for transgender people may be a good idea for some people but bad for others.

> That's what they'd say if they were moral relativists. But they're not, so they don't.[9]

Moral relativism was a destructionist measure that went out of fashion as soon as the Universal Church of the Correct was built. This church preaches a ruthlessly strict, and ever-changing, law, and it has no mercy and no forgiveness. A single thoughtcrime, and the priests banish you into the outer darkness as, say, a cursed "racist." The cultists demonize those who disagree with them, including each other if they stray. The church is engaged in fanatical proselytizing, condemning heretics and seeking adherents everywhere. Every country must be converted. (I do not like it, but hey, that's me, Ok?) In exchange for total submission, the "faithful" are granted full freedom from all other moral restraints. They are the elect and can do no wrong. Moral relativism is an uncomfortable position to hold because it's so implausible, so it's no wonder that many relativists crack and begin to absolutize and objectify their own subjective preferences. René Girard has this to say about the strange victimist phenomenon:

> [1] Neo-paganism would like to turn the Ten Commandments and all of Judeo-Christian morality into some alleged intolerable violence, and indeed its primary objective is their complete abolition. Faithful observance of the moral law is perceived as complicity with the forces of persecution that are essentially religious. … the moral law [is seen as] an instrument of repression and persecution.
>
> [2] We hear repeated in every way that we no longer have an absolute. But the inability of Nietzsche and Hitler to demolish the concern for victims and then later the embarrassed silence of the latter day Nietzscheans show for sure that this concern is not relative. It is our absolute. The current process of spiritual demagoguery and rhetorical overkill has transformed the concern for victims into a totalitarian command and a permanent inquisition.[10]

Again, gay propaganda demands "more love." We are supposed to affirm their vice, as if spoiling children. But the more they revel in it, the deeper their degradation. "More love" won't work; it will only corrupt the homosexuals still further. Jesus of course warned us about this error: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. … until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter… will pass from the law, until all things have taken place."[11] Obeying the moral law has two effects: first, it makes one metaphysically good and worthy of love by others; second, it prepares one himself to love God and neighbor. (1) The pseudo victims falsely accusing others of injustices themselves are guilty

as sin. The wicked claim to be oppressed by the righteous, that it should come to this! These people deserve not "love" but contempt; if they are lucky, they will obtain mercy. (2) Take away natural righteousness as the foundation, and charity, too, will inevitably collapse with horrific results. There will be, just as there have already been, rivers of blood shed by people who arrogate "good intentions."

Westermarck sees "resentment" and "retributive kindness" as expressly moral emotions. Resentment is "a hostile attitude of mind towards a living being, or something taken for a living being, as a cause of pain."[12] But surely, specifically moral resentment or indignation arises from being treated unjustly. Pain, sorrow, disappointment, frustration are extremely general feelings and are caused *without* injustice all the time in which case resentment is unreasonable. But whether pain was inflicted justly or unjustly must be decided before allowing one's feelings to take hold, and that is done via making an intellectual judgment. The second criminal crucified next to Jesus admitted that "we are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve"[13] and was reassured by the Lord precisely for his *lack* of resentment. Hence morality cannot be reduced to subjective feelings but has a cognitive component. Westermarck calls this opinion "absolutely meaningless," but it's unclear why. Perhaps he wishes to say that we sort of feel things blindly, then reflect on these feelings, and finally form a judgment consisting in rationalizing what we have felt. It seems that we must then be perpetually lashing out at and exacting "revenge" on people for the "pain" they caused us without ever reflecting on whether or not they are within their rights. And this is absurd. A whale is also a living being, yet it is clearly irrational to seek vengeance on one for an injury.

Westermarck admits that "moral judgments are also passed on emotions… What about the censure we pass on a person who rejoices at the misfortune of another?"[14] His reply is inadequate: the problem is, if it is possible for "moral resentment" itself to be wrongful, then how can this feeling be the sufficient source of moral rightness? What I feel indignant about is by that fact wrong; but could I myself be indignant viciously or falsely? If so, then there is a standard of moral evaluation independent of mere emotions.

4.2. Intersubjectivism

We can follow Sayre-McCord by calling the idea that morality is a set of social conventions and practices within a particular community "intersubjectivism." Presumably, intersubjectivism, like subjectivism, can be "tolerant" relativist or "imperialistic" absolutist. (Strictly speaking, tolerance does not follow from relativism: perhaps tolerance is right in culture *A* and wrong in culture *B*. *B* may acknowledge that *A*'s

ways are right for *A* but still attack and subjugate *A* because rightness-for-*A* is not for *B* a sufficient reason to leave *A* in peace. Maybe the citizens of *B* just don't *like* the sorts of things the citizens of *A* do and feel that decimating *A* utterly will relieve them of much discontent.) Now under both subjectivism and objectivism, one can discover what is morally good or right "by himself" in the privacy of his own home. Under subjectivism, he needs only to attend to his feelings; under objectivism, he can contemplate and make deductions from human nature a priori, or try to, in the above manner. But under intersubjectivism, he must venture out and engage in empirical research by studying some particular society's mores, customs, and positive laws. Anthropology replaces normative ethics. It may indeed be the ambition of some anthropologists to do just that, but philosophers should resist it. Velleman defends cultural relativism in the following inane manner:

> The Kikuyu may have reasons for practicing female circumcision, and if they have such reasons, they have them because they live like Kikuyu. Westerners have reason to abominate the practice, and they have those reasons because they live like Westerners.[15]

But of course "living like Kikuyu" includes practicing female circumcision. What kind of a circular explanation is that? Is it perhaps the "essence" of being Kikuyu that they practice female circumcision? *Must* they do this, lest they lose their entire identity? But then who cares if they lose it; maybe they ought to. Velleman suggests that we seek to understand others and be understood in turn, to interpret and be interpreted. Not being understood means that the other guy does not even consider you human. Mutual interpretability brings about a convergence toward "the ordinary." Very well, but is the point of convergence arbitrary? What determines it? The most charitable exegesis of Velleman is that people tend to form like-minded communities. "Every living thing loves its own kind, and we all love someone like ourselves."[16, b] Scholars fraternize with other scholars and end up living in close proximity to each other, such as in Greenwich Village in New York, which makes it the case that residents of Greenwich Village tend to "admire widely cited scholars." But morality is presumably something more fundamental than bylaws governing mere civil associations and networks. One can come to depreciate scholars, leave Greenwich Village, and start admiring successful entrepreneurs. One can even cease being a Kikuyu; for example, one may grow tired of being a primitive savage. Certainly it cannot, on relativism, be an absolute moral rule that one ought to abide by the relative and arbitrary morality of his local culture. But on the view of morality defended in this book, there is no way to stop being human.

There is thus room for universal human rights, including perhaps the right of a female not to be subjected to circumcision.

Sometimes it is said that relativism can be objective in the sense that (a) it can be objectively right to do as one's culture demands or even that (b) it is objectively the case that what is right for each person is to do what he likes. Certainly (a) is paradoxical, for which culture has laid down this moral rule? And what if different cultures conflict about it? Suppose I am a Kikuyu and travel to Rome. Must I, when in Rome, do as the Romans do? Perhaps among the Kikuyu the Roman ways count for nothing. (Indeed, perhaps the Kikuyu law explicitly prohibits me from practicing Roman customs.) At the most it is a prudential maxim: I do not as a guest want to offend or get in trouble with the Romans. But if I can get away with doing something un-Roman, this would not be immoral. But the same holds when I return to my tribe. Why should I behave as a Kikuyu there if my interests are better served by noncompliance? Why are the other tribesmen an authority over me? I may yield to raw power, such as if the other Kikuyu threaten to banish me for any naughty behavior, but I see no reason to dignify their judgments as "morally right." Certainly a society *can* get morality right, in which case it *will* be an objective duty to follow it, but in virtue of its correctness not in virtue of mere agreement or pressure; nor will it be a duty to follow the moralities of societies that got it wrong. Perhaps (a) holds because it is utilitarian, such that blindly submitting to the rules of whatever culture one finds himself in subtly promotes general happiness or something like that. But in that case obviously utilitarianism will be an absolute moral theory binding on every culture. Intersubjectivist relativism is self-refuting. (b) is particularly senseless, because how can it be a moral duty to do whatever I prefer doing anyway? I do such things for pleasure not out of duty. If morality and narrow self-interest fully coincide, why bother with morality in the first place? A duty to do what I want is entirely superfluous. Hence subjectivist relativism is not a moral theory but rather absence of one.

Since a relativist is not a nihilist, he should want to retain for himself the ability to denounce people for immoral behavior. But for each person, Smith, what exactly is "his" community by the ordinances of which he is bound? It cannot be anything like all the people ruled by the state by which Smith is also ruled since the state is no moral arbiter. Nor can it be defined as all the people who actually keep the local customs since on this definition, by dismissing these customs, Smith puts himself outside his old community, thereby becoming immune to any criticism by the intersubjectivist relativist. (If I'm on another man's private property, such as in a grocery store, then I of course have to respect his particular rules; if I violate them, I'll be thrown out. But that is a mere corollary of absolute capitalistic property rights; in addition, it

cannot be said that I and the store owner form a "community.") If Smith *thinks* that he *ought to* abide by the relevant customs but fails to do so, he may be subject to censure; indeed, he may censure himself for hypocrisy. But that straightforwardly collapses intersubjectivism into agent subjectivism: Smith is morally culpable, it would have to be submitted, because he dislikes his own actions. Observer Jones can only condemn Smith on the basis of the moral standards to which Smith himself subscribes; that Jones happens to share these standards and dislike the same things Smith dislikes is an extraneous accident. Jones is not an authority over Smith; who is Jones to judge Smith? And if Smith felt good about himself, then Jones would be altogether out of line to admonish him.

Gibbard makes the following rather quaint claim:

> The biological function of the mechanisms underlying our normative capacities is to coordinate…, not to put something in the head in correspondence with their subject matter; it is to coordinate what is in one person's head with what is in another's.

Gibbard's example of the relevant "coordination" is when my feeling guilty for doing something hooks up with another's feeling angry about it. But let's take coordination more broadly, indeed in the familiar sense of coordinating production in the economy. There are more and less successful schemes of such coordination. If, as I am insisting, free-market capitalism is the preeminent such system, then the ethics of economic agents had better reflect this "substantive fact." It may be that "normative discussion… will lead to the consensus it does in virtue of various pressures on the discussants; different pressures on them will lead to different consensus judgments."[17] But the consensus must not be arbitrary. It should correspond to the natural laws (of which economic laws are part) that govern men and that should be heeded by them. Likewise, both guilt and anger must be rational, indeed justified, rather than merely complementary.

Not all of the subjectivist's preferences presumably have moral import. But how would the subjectivist be able to distinguish between preferences that do and preferences that do not result in a moral evaluation? My only guess is that an economic or physical preference could be one a disagreement about which between two people does not lead to a violent dustup, and moral preference would be one for which it does. Thus, if Smith likes soup, and Jones likes sandwiches, then in the market economy they can both get what they want. But if Smith hates it when people get abortions, and Jones likes it or does not mind it, then they must fight with each other until the victor can coerce the loser to accept his conceits. It's easy to see how this is an argument against

subjectivism. Ethics regards fundamental human relations. On objectivity, there are superior and inferior such relations. If I think you and I should be complementary to each other, and you think we should be equal, then we cannot simply agree to disagree; I cannot coherently say, for example, "Ok, fine, you live the way you want to live, and I'll live the way I want to live, how about that?" The matter involves both of us intimately, and there must be either an agreement or a brawl as a result of which one party imposes its preferred relationship by force. A subjectivist can legitimately say, "I like sushi, and I am going to get me some"; he cannot solipsistically say, "I like equality between me and Jones, and I am going to establish it." Surely, Jones' opinion counts for something. Intersubjectivism merely substitutes skirmishes between communities for skirmishes between individuals: Smithtown cannot simply will a relation with Jonestown without any concern for what the citizens of Jonestown think. If objectivism is true, then it benefits everyone to stand in the best attainable social relations to everyone else. There is hope for the truth to come out in an ethical discussion and for universal agreement and peace. But on subjectivism, what relations are to prevail is a matter of subjective preference. This, far from being "tolerant," is a recipe for endless war.

Hume appears to have been a subjectivist, as is clear from passages like:

> To have the sense of virtue, is nothing but to *feel* a satisfaction of a particular kind from the contemplation of a character. The very *feeling* constitutes our praise or admiration. We go no farther; nor do we inquire into the cause of the satisfaction. We do not infer a character to be virtuous, because it pleases: But in feeling that it pleases after such a particular manner, we in effect feel that it is virtuous.[18]

However, later in the same chapter he adduces a forceful objection to his own theory. If we mistakenly deem metaethics to be subjectivist + desire-driven, then how do we tell apart metaphysical goods (say, the nobility of charity toward a man who is such a good or the depravity of murder) from physical goods (say, the relish of eating ice-cream or the awfulness of the screech of monkeys)? "If virtue and vice be determined by pleasure and pain, these qualities must, in every case, arise from the sensations; and consequently any object, whether animate or inanimate, rational or irrational, might become morally good or evil, provided it can excite a satisfaction or uneasiness." Hume's first reply is that the pleasures and pains associated with virtue and vice are "peculiar" and presumably uniquely different from any pleasure produced by a merely material object. *He* may have had his own feelings fully sorted out, but I don't, so what he is saying exactly is mysterious.

Hume might say than wine, music, and a man are good *because* they cause pleasure but *for* different qualities; thus, wine is good for its flavor; music, for its harmony; and man, for his virtue. But look: wine and music are my playthings. They exist solely for my amusement and are thrown away with ennui or even hatred when I find them tiresome. On the other hand, a girl is not a device that assists my masturbation. A human being is not a consumer good. At the very least, then, we must acknowledge that wine is good physically, and a man is good metaphysically. Hume is indicating that the goodness of both, despite this straightforward distinction, is fully derivative from the pleasure they engender. This is plausible for wine. But wouldn't the *man* still be good, as in a worthy of object of charity, even if I never knew of him? Isn't it in fact a test of *my* moral goodness whether I love people?

4.3. Two kinds of oughts

Looking at Table 6, we can see that Hume is correct in saying that reason (plan-making – yin) is a slave to passions (procuring of enjoyment, fruit), but *only in the narrow happiness trinity*. There, reason is indeed reduced to cranking out means to arbitrarily chosen ends. But narrow happiness is the last human end. Before one can pursue it, he must attain the first end or "higher humanity" in the nature trinity and the second end of "approved-of identity" in the personality trinity. Things are different there. Yang mates with yin in order to produce fruit. Thus, for nature, an evil will or hatred for fellow men manifests itself often enough in various heinous crimes. Now the wages of sin is death, physically on the 1st or in hellfire on the 3rd level (the 2nd-level soul is immortal). Hence, one must so bend the desires with his reason as to obtain the nature of willing good to other citizens in order to avoid prison or execution. Then the person will be socially free and able to live his life as he pleases and seek his own personal ends. The intellect straightens out the will for the sake of survival, bodily and ultimately even spiritual. In other words, for desire-driven motivation, the intellect serves the will by devising means of changing the world so that the world matches one's desires. Here, the world comes to conform to the will with the help of one's reason. For duty-driven motivation, the will serves the intellect by becoming what the reality of the moral law demands that it ought to be. In this case, reason conforms itself to the world by coercing the will to reflect faithfully the objective nature of man.

The fruit that ought to be or ought to be loved, depending on the kind of good we are dealing with, is a *categorical* ought; the yang and yin that unite to give birth to the fruit are *hypothetical* oughts. For physical goods, the hypothetical ought is the means to one's end and the use of the means in attaining the end. Before a choice is made, nothing

in particular ought to be. Once an option being contemplated has been picked, it acquires the status "ought to be." This ought is categorical. It just ought to be, period. But now that an end has been specified, the means to that end will also need to be fixed. Once this is done, I take on a prudential duty to resort to the means to secure the end. As per the meaning of "duty," I *ought to* perform the duty.

The end I have blessed ought to be categorically; it's just there, sitting there waiting for me to get cracking. It would be pedantic, I think, to insist that any particular end is itself a means to "happiness"; hence, contra Mises, no such end is an ultimate given; a person can be persuaded or himself come to realize that a goal he is trying to achieve should be revised as unlikely to enhance his happiness. (The ultimate given is how a human being *arrives to* any end: by *judging* what constitutes such by and for himself.) But the means or, say, the most effective means to get to this end ought to be merely hypothetically: I ought to use the means only if I am dead set on attaining the end. If the end evaporates – say, I change my mind, so does the obligation to employ the means. More to the point: let us say that I am dithering whether to sign a particular contract. There are two possible worlds in my mind, the world in which I sign and the world in which I fail to sign. Maybe God can predict my decision, but I cannot: if I could *predict*, then I wouldn't need to *decide*. Nor can another man predict reliably, for that would require an implausible for humans godlike insight into my psyche. Hence, which course of action ought to be is as yet unknown. But once the decision is made, I load onto my back the heavy burden to abide by the contract. The signing of the contract right after my decision but (1) before I actually sign it ought to be, (2) after I sign it ought to continue to be, all categorically; but (3) the terms of the contract ought to be fulfilled hypothetically.

An ought can then be generated by signing a contract. From the physical act of putting ink on paper there can arise an obligation to do as agreed. An objection follows that placing a signature on a piece of paper does not *logically* entail that one agrees to do everything stipulated by the contents of the paper. Well, not logically, no. Certainly the signature is not the obligation itself. But neither is the act of signing an empty ritual or magical incantation. Rather it's a legal *sign* of an obligation taken up. In short, it is a *human action*, and as such, it has a meaning, it can be understood, and is in fact intended by the signers to be understood in a highly precise way. A written and signed contract is a physical sacrament, evidence of the spiritual thing; it inaugurates and puts into motion a process of exchanging goods and services. Signing a contract creates a mutual understanding between the signers. For example, a part of this understanding is that one can sue another for breach of contract, and that a judge's decision will vary based on

whether the signature was duly made or forged, and so forth. The actions of the parties will depend on the mind meld supplied by the terms of the contract.

The hypothetical ought for physical goods relates means to ends, or costs to revenues. If Smith itches to acquire Jones' orange, then he must give up one of his apples to Jones, as both men reckon. Smith's revenue is an orange; his cost is an apple; vice versa for Jones. These have been established during the negotiation of the contract with the corresponding choices made by both parties. Smith decided, *categorically* and underivatively from any "is," that "An orange *ought to* be in my possession at the expense of an apple"; having approved of this decision in his mind (by rejecting all the poorer, as far as he was concerned, alternatives), he then, *hypothetically* and derivatively from his present situation, realizes that he indeed *ought to* give up the apple if he wants that orange. In other words:

"Which bargain ought I to strike?" yields a physical categorical ought.
"For the bargain I have just struck I ought to do this and that" is a physical hypothetical ought.

"Who ought to be loved?" produces a metaphysical categorical ought.
"By justice, for all bargains, I ought to do my part in order to claim the other party's part" is a metaphysical hypothetical ought.

Consider now a doctor who ought to follow the ethical guidelines of his profession, or a person who, after promising to meet another for lunch, ought to keep his promise, or a chess player who ought to stick to the rules of the game. What kind of oughts are these? They are very similar: the young person's choice to *become* a doctor is categorical; his obligation to conduct his business ethically is hypothetical to his wanting to *stay* a doctor. If he behaves unethically, then it is questionable whether he understands what "being a doctor" means. A man who makes a promise chooses categorically to accept the institution of promising; having chosen thus, he is obliged to comport himself according to the rules of the institution. Insofar as one decides to start a chess game, this decision is categorical; but now that the game is in progress, he needs to abide by the rules of chess if his moves are to have any meaning. A single exchange is a contract; a marriage is a covenant, till death do us part and all that, the difference being that no one exchange necessitates another, but marriage is a lifelong relationship, and once two people have married (in so doing accepting the institution of marriage), they need to do and keep doing right by each other if they are to stay married. We can see that our distinction between categorical and hypothetical oughts remains, and rule-bound *institutions* are a special case of it: the categorical end chosen is to benefit from the institution; the hypothetical means to the end is to respect that

institution's nature.

The various sets of norms, including etiquette, professional ethics, even games, all have the feature of correcting desires: even if one feels like being rude, etiquette pressures him eventually to polish his roughness around the edges. One needs to *be* polite or classy, not just act politely. But unlike natural law and the basic morality engendered by it, none of these norms objectively require to be accepted by anyone. Their imperatives are still hypothetical. "The dismissive remark 'He isn't one of us' has a legitimate role to play in practices of etiquette," Michael Smith suggests in a defense of etiquette relativism,[19] and indeed no one has to belong to any group, as opposed to the human race. Moreover, the purpose of etiquette may be to smooth out social interaction, to prevent outward shows of disrespect or venom and suchlike. There may be a moral basis to it, but there is also a legitimate variability of ways to accomplish this. It's intersubjective. Physical goods are then subjective and arbitrary; metaphysical goods are objective and definite; and moral goods are objective and arbitrary. We'll postpone a fuller discussion of moral goods until later.

In short, something is a physical good if it is loved and categorically ought to be; an action to bring that good about ought to be hypothetically; something is a metaphysical good if it is and categorically ought to be loved; a duty that serves charity ought to be executed hypothetically.

4.4. Ideal observer theories

A moral subjectivist can be persuaded that he is wrong on some ethical issue, but only in the same sense in which I can be persuaded that a given food I'm eating contains too much sugar for my own good. Otherwise, it's hard to convince a subjectivist of a mistake even if he asserts that he was trying to destroy something beautiful. Indeed, to the question, "Is it possible to be mistaken in judgment?" I reply that in the case of physical goods, since love compels judgment, and one cannot be mistaken about what he at the moment of choice covets the most, it is only possible to be imprudent with respect to means but not to ultimate ends. In the case of metaphysical goods, since judgment compels love, it is easy enough to make a mistake, such that those who judge aright are called wise, and those who judge poorly are called foolish. E.g., a person might think foolishly that the welfare of the "planet," whatever that might be, has priority over the welfare of humans.

A more sophisticated version of ethical subjectivism grants that not everyone's preference might be the last word on ethics. But, it says, anything liked by an "ideal observer" (IO) who is free from human weaknesses and irrationality (however understood) might well be the quintessence of morality. Roojen introduces the ideal observer theory

(IOT) as follows: “An action is right iff it is disposed to elicit approval from an observer who was fully non-morally informed, impartial, disinterested, omnipercipient, consistent, and otherwise normal, in normal conditions.”[20] The idea presumably is that it is our non-moral flaws that hobble our moral judgments. If this is only a definition, on the same level as “an action is right iff approved of by an orangutan,” then it can be impugned only as abuse of language. Nor can it reasonably be the unhelpful notion that IOs are those entities who reliably produce true moral judgments. For what is a true judgment? One made by an IO. This is circular. But if it presupposes a substantive claim that the IO is an absolute authority and does in fact infallibly come up with true judgments, then it can be doubted. In the first place, there *are* no IOs. We can’t actually resort to their advice. Roojen strangely considers the question of how an IO will rule in any given case to be an “empirical issue,” as if it could be settled by petitioning the Supreme Court or something like that. But since IOs do not exist, there is no one to run any empirical tests on. Nor is it an a priori issue since we cannot at will idealize our own minds.

Further, whose actual subjective preferences does the IO inherit? Does he like soup or sandwiches? Is he into football or baseball? Or are these things irrelevant to morality? But why, on subjectivism? There is, as we have seen, no way here to distinguish between moral and non-moral preferences. What would prevent an IO from declaring not “You shall not kill” but “You shall eat chicken wings” if that’s just what “elicits his approval”? Who shall be insolent enough to try to substitute our preferences with his own, however “ideal”? Each person’s ideal alter ego’s judgments might converge *if* there was an objective ethics to be discerned. But this is hopeless on subjectivism. Nor can there be a universal IO whose only subjective desire is to obey the moral law. That’s indeed the very definition of a merely material object, a robot. One cannot vindicate subjectivism which seems to require *human subjects* by programming this thing to output correct morality.

Let Smith say that a certain action is right. Jones feels it is not right. Smith proclaims: “You, Jones, are not being an ideal observer. If you were, then you’d feel as I do.” Jones replies: “You pathetic worm! How dare you insult me so gravely? It is you who are failing to be the ideal observer!” Their disagreement cannot be resolved on this version of subjectivism any better than on simple subjectivism. This “theory” may be interpreted as an attempt by the philosopher advocating it to elevate his own ego to the status of the “fully non-morally informed, impartial,” etc. judge. The philosopher imagines himself the supreme legislator, and any who disagrees with him is a despicable villain. The philosopher is always right, and his will is law.

If ethical subjectivism is attractive because it affirms the

"practicality of morality" (i.e., because it explains internalism to be dealt with in Chapter 5), then IOTs neatly vitiate this advantage without compensating the subjectivist with anything useful. For morality is for *real people*. How can one possibly know whether he is or is not being an IO? Which specific individual who is in such an admirable and lucky position could he rely on for guidance? Now perhaps morality is best studied from happy people. Since saints are free, not constricted by any obstacles within their souls to pursue narrow happiness, they will, unlike vicious people, at least have a chance of catching it. An ideal observer then is ideal *because* he is happy. But *true* happiness is such an elusive thing that identifying and learning from saints may be highly nontrivial. Happiness is also very empirical; it is instantiated in this particular man and that woman with all their uniqueness and idiosyncrasies, so it is of little use to our deductive philosophy.

There might be multiple kinds of observers who are reasonably ideal: e.g., one is disinterestedly benevolent, the other exudes personal charity; one is just, the other, merciful; one prioritizes consequences, the other intentions; one is morally rigorous, the other gives room for supererogation; etc. Being in an ideal state does not guarantee uniquely right judgments. One must also be pure in heart (since wisdom and innocence or charity are inseparable) in order reliably to judge aright, though of course sinners, too, can cognize their duties (if they couldn't, there would scarcely be a point to ethics). But that's just what the non-moral IOTs do *not* require since they only idealize intellects. I am of course committed to the idea that a wise Crusoe would treat Friday justly. Even if Crusoe bears a hateful grudge against Friday, it may be in Crusoe's interest to let go of it. Even wise Attila the Hun might become interested in just conduct. But the task of wisdom is to perceive the connections between all things on the global scale. To imitate Tolstoy, all wise men think alike; every fool is foolish in his own way. The reason for this is simply that sages see reality for what it is, and this vision is objective. Wise men *see the truth*; hence "right action is whatever a wise man would approve of" is not subjectivism.

In short, there is no reason to expect that an idealized observer will not dare to call his own arbitrary whims "morality" regardless of how soberly his mind works. It is only if we posit that the content of morality is independent of one's feelings and attitudes that progress can be made.

The absolutist IOT is simply a debased and atheized version of the divine command theory of ethics (DCT) of which we have disposed earlier. (Thus, for example, the Euthyphro dilemma applies to it with a vengeance.) For presumably there is no greater ideal than (the Christian) God. The *idea* of the God of the philosophers is a "perfect being." We should strive to be *like* Jesus who fulfills the moral law.

Right judgment would then objectively bind all with what God subjectively prefers. I don't find asking, "What would Jesus do?" particularly helpful. (I think that Jesus, if it were not for His authentic and burning love for us, would gladly leave us wretches alone and lose Himself in His Father's adoring embrace.[c]) Still, though, the divine command theory, despite being false, fares much better than the ideal observer theory.

1. God's attributes are well-understood and, in my view, cohere well together, so the definition of God as a perfect being is unproblematic.
2. There is a simple and clear-cut criterion for whether I'm reasoning correctly about morality: did or did not God give such and such command to us through His prophets? The giving of the moral law may be "self-authenticating": if you are instructed that something is good by God, then you both know and are fully certain that it was God who so instructed you and who in so doing told the truth.
3. There is only one God, so there is no room for honest disagreement, as there would be between anthropomorphic IOs. For example, God can be seen as an ideal utilitarian whose providence comprehends the entire world and sees into the infinity of our everlasting lives; at the same time, God is an ideal deontologist, never unjustly sacrificing any one soul for the "greater good." It may be a bit of a mystery how God manages both of these feats, but again, the DCT can just assume it, unlike IOTs.
4. God is perfect, including perfectly wise and good, loves his creatures greatly, does not respect persons, etc., and does not make mistakes.

The DCT is almost fully objectivist since God's moral pronouncements will realistically bind all without distinction. Thus, James Fox argues that the "binding or obligatory norm is the Divine authority, imposing upon the rational creature the obligation of living in conformity with his nature."[21]

An IOT has the problem that if ideal observer *A* thinks *X* is right or required, *B* thinks *X* is wrong, and *C* thinks *X* is permissible, then the verdict is at the very least inconclusive. There is then no such thing as *the* ideal observer, and we should remember that this was implied in the concept: an IO is merely a beefed-up version of some particular flesh-and-blood individual. If an IO can misjudge, then we have a reductio of the original definition. The most Firth has shown in his paper[22] is that being omniscient ("with respect to non-ethical facts"), omnipercipient, disinterested, dispassionate, and consistent are *virtues* when it comes to

rendering moral judgments. These virtues might be sufficient for knowing the truth *if* there was truth to be discovered. Otherwise, it is far from clear that every actual human being, when miraculously upgraded into having these virtues, will judge exactly alike. A subjectivist can certainly take recourse to relativism, saying that *X* is right "for *A*" if a non-morally idealized copy of *A* approves of it, etc. But that's not much of an improvement over standard relativism. It may be possible to downgrade God into an angel who, though having no natural interest in human affairs, nonetheless feels charity for us and wishes to help us understand ethics. The angel possesses the Firthian virtues preeminently. But the angel's judgments may, like God's, command us to obey the natural law by meticulously explicating its requirements. It is still man's nature that is the authority for us, not the angel's teachings. A subjectivist metaethics simply does not follow from this device.

4.5. Economics and ethics

The subjectivism of this sort then is outrageous rubbish. There is, however, a sophisticated and important, including for our purposes, form of moral subjectivism that found its full expression in the works of some utilitarian economists, such as Henry Hazlitt and Leland Yeager. It regards the claim that any immoral action is imprudent. There is, it turns out, no real conflict between the interests of an "individual" and "society." In fact, under capitalism, a well-functioning society is the most pivotal means to any individual for the realization of that individual's own personal selfish ends. Outside society, as we know from Hobbles, life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." Even more, life outside society is literally inconceivable; a human being or even an isolated family simply cannot survive in the wild: "Homo sapiens appeared on the stage of earthly events neither as a solitary food-seeker nor as a member of a gregarious flock, but as a being consciously cooperating with other beings of his own kind. … We cannot even imagine a reasonable being living in perfect isolation and not cooperating at least with members of his family, clan, or tribe."[23] Even Daniel Defoe could not make his Robinson Crusoe prevail on his own without letting him salvage numerous goods from the shipwreck that only a high civilization could have originated. Therefore, the task of the preservation and improvement of society becomes everyone's most urgent concern; the maintenance of swiftly progressing market economy is an end all citizens have in common. But a criminal precisely "harms society," and by that very fact madly wounds that which is the source of his very life and every pleasure of civilization. He is biting the hand that feeds him. As regards the state, "What the social apparatus of compulsion and coercion achieves is that individuals whom malice, shortsightedness, or mental inferiority prevent from realizing that by

indulging in acts that are destroying society they are *hurting themselves* and all other human beings are compelled to avoid such acts."[24] Now Mises grokked very well that the free market ensures only the "rightly understood" harmony of human interests by which he meant "long-term" harmony. A free economy will advance so briskly that before long even a common man in it will enjoy a standard of living much higher than any cruel despot in a primitive – and therefore stagnant or even worsening – social order. Everyone therefore has a stake in the "smooth functioning of social cooperation." An immoral act then is simply impudent precisely from the criminal's point of view; a clearheaded man will never transgress, because he will "adjust his conduct to the requirements of social cooperation and look upon his fellow men's success as an indispensable condition of his own."[25] We have already used some of these essential points in our proofs of the iniquity of murder, slavery, and suchlike. We have also seen that in general there may on the contrary be a definite conflict between a criminal's interests and those of society at large. The inevitable violence is dampened by the state externally and by the voice of conscience or apprehension of the moral law internally. But crime is often resorted to for the sake of narrow (and at the expense of true) happiness for a while even despite these. One can, sort of, profit from one's own wrong. There thus appears room for ethics and its duties.

Anti-capitalism as an ideology then is seriously antisocial. There cannot be a more prominent means even to personal morality than understanding the unique usefulness of liberty and property to natural (and hence Christian) universal peace and brotherhood of men. Far be it from me to impugn economic utilitarianism if it stays within its proper bounds. But it is not *sufficient*, and this lack is precisely what carves out an independent realm for ethics.

It is sometimes possible to prove that one needs to have some subjective preference. While you can't prove that "you shall enjoy, or have a pro attitude toward, carrots," you can prove, or I have attempted to prove, that "you shall dislike, or have a con attitude toward, murder." Failing to use human beings fully in accordance with their nature harms oneself, etc. But isn't that similar in style to a proposition that one ought not, for example, to poke carrots into his eyes? The latter is as stupid as the former is but, unlike it, is not immoral. It's true then that one ought to respect the natures of both carrots and humans and not abuse either. But unlike carrots, humans can be harmed through abuse. We saw that there are at least two types of hatred: rejection, as in "I hate carrots and will not eat them" which applies to physical goods, and willing evil which is the thing signified by harming a human being. The former is unproblematic, but for the latter, if harm is proscribed, then so is hatred; hence unlike carrots, man is a metaphysical rather than physical

good who ought to be loved. Note that if I kill my aunt for the inheritance money, I cannot say that it wasn't personal, it was just business; I did not hate my aunt, I even liked her; I just liked the money more, and the murder was just a means to an end. The thing the sign signifies is real. On the other hand, of course, not all harm one's actions cause is wrongful: an entrepreneur who puts his competitor out of business is to be praised; buying the last ticket to the show and thereby denying it to the people back in line is permissible; going for a drive and by that fact imposing on other drivers a slightly higher risk of accident is not morally wrong; and so on. Once the content of the moral law, the people's rights and duties, is established, it is specifically *unjust* harm that wrecks the harmony in society and in so doing excites unlawful hatred. A criminal is morally depraved to the extent that he is unjust, stands in wrong relationships with his fellow men (within an ideology), and ultimately hates other people. The proofs are subjectivist and praxeological, zeroing in on undesirable consequences of misuse of humans, but the theorems are objective and ethical. For example, in the proof, Crusoe should treat Friday justly in order for himself to gain an advantage. Justice then secures Crusoe's physical goods or narrow happiness. But in the ethical theorem we have obtained, Crusoe's justice entails certain definite interhuman relations, specifically mutual disinterestedness, cooperation, trade, respect for the natural rights of other members of society, and ultimately charity. Willingly abiding in these relations constitutes Crusoe's metaphysical goodness; Crusoe is blessed for being clean of heart. Relation *A* is more just than relation *B* to the extent that *A* promotes progress and harmony better than *B*. *Economically*, the primitive communist economy is stagnant as compared to the dynamic growing capitalism; *ethically*, slave-equality features only rudimentary harmony as compared to the wondrously intricate evenly rotating economy of capitalism. Again, *economically*, when Crusoe oppresses Friday, such as by enslaving him, he hurts his own narrow happiness – he is less prosperous than he would be if Friday were free. *Ethically*, this oppression portends disharmony between them in which case he scars his nature: his soul is less evolved or vibrates at a lower frequency as some mystics tell it. In the first case, Crusoe self-inflicts physical injury on himself – he is being *imprudent*; in the second case, metaphysical injury – he is being *interpersonally unjust*. Economics and ethics complement each other, though they focus on different aspects of man.

"You shall not eat strange mushrooms" is a prudential maxim, one of innumerable such. It would be a stretch to describe it as a duty to oneself. For Crusoe to mistreat Friday is imprudent, but Crusoe owes the duty not to mistreat Friday to Friday, not to himself. Therefore, I don't think there are such things as duties to self; self-love suffices to impel a

man to take care of himself. Such self-love is natural and always swirls within the soul. This is unlike interpersonal supernatural charity in which one's neighbor is loved *in like manner as* oneself and whose flame may be built from a tiny spark by good deeds (which are as if kindling) mingled with holy fire. Instead of duties to self, there are, as we will see, 2nd-order desires whose satisfaction partly builds and partly reveals one's personality.

Ethical subjectivism confuses a theorem with the manner of its proof and so is forced to consider value judgments toward violent crimes, say, to not themselves be amenable to evaluation and a fortiori, criticism. "The ultimate judgments of value and the ultimate ends of human action are given for any kind of scientific inquiry; they are not open to any further analysis. Praxeology deals with the ways and means chosen for the attainment of such ultimate ends. Its object is means, not ends."[26] Mises goofed up in the first sentence: values are not ultimate givens for *ethics* and hence not for *all* "kinds of scientific inquiries." But if the moral law were erroneously deemed subjective, then ethics would evaporate without ado.

4.6. Limits to objectivity

The objectivity of morality does not entail that there must be one precise solution to every moral problem. It signifies only that whenever a moral claim is made, such as that something is forbidden or required, it must be proven or at least seem self-evident. There may be cases where no definitive proof is available, and the moralist would be stumped. For one, there is a variety of moral theories yet no consensus on which one of them or combination of them is correct. Even if there is such a theory, it may well fail to be comprehensive, leaving various problems up to commonsense morality in which there is a measure of variation in individual intuitions and judgments. If I am right that the specifically Christian part of morality is not the same for all men, then though it objectively impresses itself on each Christian, its content is unique to him. There may be difficult dilemmas where in some choice of the lesser of the two evils there is no objectively right answer and which must be solved more subjectively, such as by somehow minimizing one's subsequent guilt or regret.

As regards dilemmas, another aspect of morality's objectivity is whether moral duties have objective relative weights. On some level they do. For example, murder is a graver sin than theft; hence the duty not to murder is weightier than the duty not to steal. If you are in some bizarre situation where you simply must either murder or steal, then you are instructed to choose the lesser evil and steal. Now just as it is hopeless to assign cardinal "utils" to pleasures, it is equally nonsensical to assign cardinal weights to duties. So suppose that murder is worse

than either stealing, lying, or betraying. But is murder worse than stealing, lying, and betraying taken together? Which moral treatise makes (and proves) such comparisons? Governments of course have elaborate systems of criminal law that attempt, as one of their purposes, to make the punishment fit the crime. A combination of crimes that yields a lighter overall sentence might be objectively morally better than a combination that yields a harsher sentence. But precision here is surely hard to come by, and the matter would anyway be up to the decision of a particular judge. In such a case, the weighing of moral duties, though each objectively binding, seems to be a matter of subjective judgment. At the very least, even if there is an objectively right answer to any challenge of weighing conflicting duties, it may be unknowable due to apparent lack of a method that can reliably lead to the solution.

In sum, man is an objective metaphysical good; we are required to love one another. Man is so constituted that certain things, especially injustices, invariably harm charity, and everyone ought to avoid such self-harm by following the objective moral law. Certain general precepts for cultivating charity, such as learning, fasting, prayer, almsgiving, can also be formulated.

Footnotes

a. Hare may have realized that, saying that "we cannot get out of being men, as we can get out of being architects or out of making or using chronometers. Since this is so, there is no avoiding the (often painful) consequences of abiding by the moral judgements that we make." (*Language*, 142) Of course, not every moral sentence entails a command. For example, "The Mongol invasions were morally wrong" and "Is stealing wrong?" do not.

b. Except perhaps business competitors in a particular industry.

c. Recall also the following striking passage: "Someone in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, tell my brother to share the inheritance with me.' He replied to him, 'Friend, who appointed me as your judge and arbitrator?'" (Lk 12:13-14) God will not do our work for us.

Endnotes

1. Thomson in Harman et al, *Moral Relativism and Moral Objectivity*, 129.

2. Nagel, *Altruism*, 97.

3. Roojen, *Metaethics*, 150.

4. Arrington, *Rationalism*, Ch. 6.

5. Roojen, *Metaethics*, 108.

6. Mt 25:41-42.

7. Harman, “What Is Moral Relativism?”

8. Harman, *Moral Relativism and Moral Objectivity*, 17.

9. Rockwell, “Left.”

10. Girard, *Satan*, 178ff.

11. Mt 5:17-18.

12. Westermarck, *Relativity*, Ch. 3.

13. Lk 23:41.

14. Westermarck, *Relativity*, Ch. 6.

15. Velleman, *Relativism*, 62.

16. Ben Sira 13:15.

17. Gibbard, *Wise Choices*, 110-2.

18. Hume, *Treatise*, 3.1.2.

19. Smith, “Dispositional Theories,” 107.

20. Roojen, *Metaethics*, 122.

21. *CE*, “Natural Law.”

22. Firth, “Ethical Absolutism.”

23. Mises, *Theory and History*, 252.

24. *HA*, 281, italics mine.

25. *HA*, 833.

26. *HA*, 21.

5. Moral Internalism

People can explain their actions by revealing their reasons for them. How did they weigh the pros and cons of a particular pursuit? Morality can provide some of those reasons. And various reasons are synthesized into a single decision and a motive. What exactly were they trying to achieve, how, and what did they do? The connections between (1) morals and reasons and (2) reasons and motive can be either internal or external. Metaethical internalism proposes that the relevant link is necessary; one cannot be without the other. "People who think have ideas" is necessarily true; it's a conceptual part of thinking to in so doing entertain ideas. There is therefore an internal link between thinking and idea-getting. But "people who think have *good* ideas" is on the contrary contingent and very empirical. Here there is no such internal link. Internalism in metaethics claims that there are various necessary connections between morals, reasons, and motivation. Regarding the morals/reasons internalism, "morals" can signify an individual moral judgment which can be true or false, wise or foolish, in which case it would be morals/reasons judgment internalism, or it can stand for a true moral fact which in Steve Darwall's terminology would be morals/reasons existence internalism. Finally, internalism can be indefeasible or defeasible under certain conditions such as perhaps "irrationality."[1]

Internalism as regards physical goods and narrow happiness is straightforward when rightly interpreted. Here the "morals" in the morals/reasons connection feature not duties but economic costs and benefits of alternative courses of action. When contemplating what to do, all the latter enter into reasons for them. The link between these is internal: it is the nature of prudential reason to judge such things. For one possibility, the spread between the costs and benefits will be the largest, and that will be the most profitable thing to do. This reasons/motive connection is again internal since practical rationality aims to maximize welfare.

Internalism for metaphysical goods holds because as we have seen, duty commands one to rid himself of wicked desires by its very essence. Unless morality is "practical" in this sense, there is neither meaning nor purpose to *moral* judgments. To understand that *X* is a moral duty is ideally to have a motive to satisfy *X*. We would have indefeasible morals/reasons internalism of both flavors and indefeasible reasons/motive internalism (and therefore indefeasible morals/motive internalism), as grasping one's natural duties would be sufficient always to abide by them. Things are different in the real world. For one, I agree with St. Thomas that erring conscience binds and sometimes even excuses, such as when not negligent. Then the morals/reasons judgment

internalism is indefeasible since both a correct and incorrect judgment alike creates a duty that acts as a powerful reason pro for what it demands; but morals/reasons existence internalism is defeasible by *ignorance* of what morality demands. Of course, ignorance about fundamental natural law is fully culpable and does not as a matter of fact excuse; moral insanity condemns just as readily as malicious will; but even belief that murder is praiseworthy binds. The reasons/motive internalism is defeasible by *weakness* since the pull of duty may (unfortunately for the sinner) be outweighed by contrary considerations. Duty gives you *a* reason; it should if things were nice give you a *decisive* reason; but (1) evil desires are plentifully found in man in his fallen state; (2) all desires, including evil ones, crave satisfaction. They resist the reason provided by duty, and yielding to temptation that results in an injustice is always a weak choice. Hence the fact that we might not be able to persuade Gyges that he ought to be just does not mean that Gyges is not bound by objective moral duties. Paradoxically, the very power and invincibility that the ring gives to him that prompt him to ignore these duties are what reveal his "weak moral fiber."

A change in the belief that *X* was Ok to that *X* is wrong ineluctably introduces a conflict in the heart of the individual. Before *X* was on the table as a legitimate option. It may not have actually been chosen, but it was considered on par with every other possibility. Now wanting to do *X* is a sordid desire. The conflict is between the duty's mandate to expunge this desire and the desire's cry to be satisfied. The outcome is uncertain, and therefore again the reasons/motive internalism is defeasible through moral weakness. Therefore, the ultimate action may be unchanged if a person gives in to sin. But the conflict, however resolved, would have been fought one way or another necessarily, hence indefeasible morals/reasons judgement internalism.

Since unethical desires are to be suppressed entirely, the things and pleasures actually desired do not enter into *moral* deliberation. This answers the question of whether continued deliberation about whether to act as ethics demands by weighing non-moral reasons is rational. I contend is that it *is not* in the sense that existing evil desires must not sway the decision; yet it *is* in the sense that one must discern, acknowledge, and even "get in touch" with these desires, if only in order efficiently to purge them from the soul.

Raymond Smullyan's book of logic puzzles *The Lady or the Tiger?* has a variety of fanciful storylike setups. In one such, there is a land populated by humans and vampires, some of whom are sane and some insane. A sane person knows the truth; an insane person always believes any true proposition false. A human always *tells* the truth; a vampire always lies. Thus, a sane human will know that the sky is blue and say so. A sane vampire will know that the sky is blue but lie about it and

assert (for example) that it is green. An insane human will mistakenly hold that the sky is green and honestly proclaim it such. And an insane vampire will falsely imagine that the sky is green but lie and profess that it is blue after all (assuming ~green = blue). Note that both sane humans and insane vampires will for the most part speak identically. We can then posit our own insane vampire: a person who is both, in moral matters, *stupid* and *weak*. He will then falsely believe that murder is good but omit to do what is "good" and therefore abstain from murder. The two errors will "cancel out," and his external behavior will be (within our puzzle) indistinguishable from that of someone who is both *wise* and *strong*. This is an illustration of defeasible morals/reasons existence internalism and defeasible reasons/motive internalism.

It may be useful in understanding metaethical internalism to compare *duty* which motivates internally with *law* which motivates externally. Thus, a man of the political Left, such as in the United States, often likes to attribute good intentions to the government. A benevolent bureaucrat then wants to help; it's a beautiful thing. The leftists have their victims and their villains all sorted out. For example, they might see a guy Smith in some company working 50 hours per week. Ah, they say. This poor humble overworked employee must be exalted and delivered from the rapacious greed of his exploiter Jones. Let us bountifully decree that the employer must pay double (or triple or whatever) for overtime past 40 hours per week, say. Now if this were a command, the businessman would have to obey, just as a soldier must obey the general or be court-martialed and executed. (Jones might of course not have the money capital to pay more, in which case he'd have to petition the government for subsidies. But higher subsidies to Jones imply higher taxes on some Robinson who would then have less capital to pay *his* workers. So, even this situation is problematic.) But the regulation, while taking away some market freedom, also preserves some. This means the entrepreneur can still *react* to this law in a somewhat surprising way. He may, for example, restructure his business and as part of that reduce Smith's hours to 35 to the clear detriment both of himself since his business is now less efficient and of Smith who is now earning less money. We can see that the "holy work of mercy" since it was a coercive act did not punish the powerful and lift up the meek; it punished everyone, both the "powerful" and the "meek" alike. *Both* Smith and Jones are worse off after the law was passed than they had been before. Call this a *local* disaster.

For most people of the Left, the "bleeding heart" the government allegedly possesses is quite enough; *whatever* the (leftist) government is doing, they say rather dogmatically, *must* be beneficial, end of story. The Devouring Mother feels unwavering compassion. Leftists do their evil deeds, as we all know, with "good intentions" and while staying on the

"right side of history"; they act "for the children"; even their wars are always for their victims' "own good." No hell on earth they cause can ever damage their self-esteem. A leftist is a sort of happy natural calamity or joyful plague; but since he is fully convinced that he is radiating pure love, he is immune to criticism.

Some (comparatively few) people, however, are keen enough to acknowledge this irritating obstacle to their charitable omnipotence. But, they retort, the angelic government's loving intentions were frustrated by the vicious selfish shrewdness of the demonic entrepreneur. How dare this insolent worm defy the holy will of the supreme ruler of the commonwealth, and on such a trivial technicality, to add insult to injury! He will be dealt with harshly later; for now it is clear that the lamentable remnants of the free market ensured this outrage. For if it is indeed some preexisting sacred moral duty on the part of the employers to pay workers more for what the state calls "overtime," and the law merely punishes shameful and scandalous derelictions of this duty, then Jones' evasion is an instance of the entrepreneur's malicious intent, corruption, and sabotage. The *incentives* of regulations are indeed unsatisfactory; well then, the businessman must be forced to heed the state's *commands* without fail. But Green can issue a legitimate command to Jones in general only if Green is Jones' *boss*, such as at work or in the military. Very well, all freedom must logically be taken away, and the businessman will be fully subject to the bosses of the ruling political party. Yes! That will solve the problem.

What our leftist does not realize is that this move radically changes the situation: the economic system is no longer capitalism, however hampered by government regulations, but full-scale socialism, or fascism, depending on the flavor. There are no longer any *entrepreneurs*, any firms, any private property, any independent decision-making. All people are subordinate bureaucrats employed directly by the state in a giant all-encompassing monopoly Post Office-like corporation and bound to goose-step to the orders of the chief dictator who alone is free. Without going into details, socialism "does not work." We have obtained a *global* disaster.

This brief discussion can serve as an outline of a proof that the market economy cannot be regulated in the general interest. Every government intervention has immediate unintended (by sincere leftists) consequences that defeat the alleged "good intentions"; and as regulations multiply – since the leftists like to blame the failures of their own previous regulations on "unfettered capitalism" and insist that still further new regulations are indispensable – the economy slouches toward socialism. When the critical mass of interventions is reached, and the only possible engine of creative economic advance – the market economy – is fully obliterated, we obtain perfectly rigid stagnation and a

"utopia" in which nothing new ever happens, hardly a helpful benevolent act. (If the dictator tries to *improve* his socialist economy, his attempts to introduce novelties will completely discoordinate the system and ruin most existing production efforts. People will die from lack of essential supplies. The socialist choice is between an everlasting unchanging state of equilibrium and utter chaos.) The only rational government policy, if we admit government at all, then, is universal disciplined laissez-faire noninterventionism. The "prince" should spend his time watching TV and greeting foreign dignitaries, like they say Thomas Jefferson did, in a dressing gown, slippers, and nightcap.

For our purposes, duty is similar to a command and unlike an external incentive because it must be obeyed and cannot be evaded. Of course, moral duties are no tyranny like the plight of the people under socialism who are veritable slaves of the central planner. The command is not an arbitrary order of a crazed human dictator's subjective whims, but an objective deliverance of our very nature, and we can't help obeying or at least being influenced by it. St. Thomas observes that "the natural law is promulgated by the very fact that God instilled it into man's mind so as to be known by him naturally."[2] The relationship between law and duty may be compared and contrasted with the relationship between economic value and price. Our subjective valuations of physical goods generate actions of exchange, and prices, whether barter or money, are social and intersubjective exchange ratios. Our objective valuations of metaphysical goods and the natural law (which may be cashed out as everything whatsoever that causes man to fail to be omnipotent) bring forth the duties to abide by the provisions of this law, since any rebellion is ultimately futile. The law applies to the whole society and compels its every member; but the duty to obey the law falls on an individual. Thus, a law that is generally not being followed is perhaps by that fact "repealed," but until and unless it loses force completely, one's duty to submit to it does not depend on the compliance of others.

Private individuals and firms of course issue all sorts of incentives to each other. Credit card company *X* charges a late fee for not paying the bill on time. The fee is a pure incentive since it's not a way for *X* to earn money, indeed it's made to be entirely avoided, but its purpose is to redress the inevitable human depravity. For it is a natural duty to pay one's bills. One who neglects to do so is a thief and as such something less than human. Let Smith be such a miscreant. He commits a crime, but the credit card company does not care about his soul. It wishes to profit from trade. What is it to *X* that Smith is unjust or goes to hell? Smith's salvation is his own concern. But *X* wants what is by right due to it. The incentive is a way to prod Smith into righteousness externally. Yet the internal duty to Smith sticks around. It is impossible for a single

man to survive outside society; hence Smith cannot say that by not paying the bill he corrupts only his relationship with other human beings, while remaining pure in his own self. Being part of capitalistic social cooperation is precisely the nature of every individual, and it is the purity of *this* nature that is at stake. Even an occasional hermit depends fully on the alms of the productive people.

Again, let a person argue: if we are to "control guns," then take guns away from criminals, not law-abiding citizens. The devil replies thus:

> If a law is passed banning guns, then all "law-abiding citizens" will need to turn their guns in.
>
> Those who refuse will instantly cease to be law-abiding and become criminals, thus deserving to be disarmed by force and imprisoned and even killed if they resist.
>
> In any case, there are no law-abiding people in our land of a million laws. "Show me the man, and I'll show you the crime," said Beria, Stalin's chief of secret police.
>
> You're all guilty of something already, hence precisely *non*-law-abiding, hence essentially outlaws who have avoided persecution only because you have managed to blend in with the crowd.
>
> The law is not your shield but my weapon.
>
> In short, the absurdity of pleading with the me not to take your guns because you are "law-abiding" is evident to all.

I counter: you are wrong, devil, because you've failed to make the distinction between natural and positive law. It may be true that the government has outlawed something so wholesome as self-defense, but it has done so unjustly. It is thus a tyrannical and wicked government. But most citizens, being nonviolent and honest in everyday dealings, are perfectly innocent in the eyes of *natural* law. Very few commit genuinely repugnant crimes of murder or robbery. It is also true that all the state – run by you, devil – knows is how to destroy. But it is not omnipotent and can be fought. Hence we distinguish between incentive-making positive law and duty-making natural law.

Therefore, ethics is a combination of objectivity, non-Humean duty-drivenness, and internalism. One can reject the claim that morality is a thing by disavowing each of its components. Let me then propose that "the moral law commands or imposes a duty on me to cool my savage hotheadedness." One can say with Mises that objectivism is false; an individual is never commanded to do anything in life; he seeks arbitrary and subjective personal ends and uses means to attain them. "All ends and all means, both material and ideal issues, the sublime and the base, the noble and the ignoble, are ranged in a single row and

subjected to a decision which picks out one thing and sets aside another. Nothing that men aim at or want to avoid remains outside of this arrangement into a unique scale of gradation and preference."[3] Of course, things get more complicated if we allow, as apparently never occurred to Mises, that desires themselves can be created or destroyed (by the performance of duties) and sometimes ought to be.

One can grant that not all desires are equally legitimate but deny that people are ever required to detoxify their hearts. "Nothing human is alien to me," and even cruelty and sadism are allegedly aspects of one's humanity. For example, one may encourage students personally to experience every sin, I guess just to know what it feels like.

Finally, one can admit objectivity and duty-driven nature of morality but discard internalism, saying that duty does not have spiritual consequences by its very meaning. To do so is to argue for the possibility of an *amoralist*, a person fully aware of the moral law including the theory of metaethics propounded herein but uninterested in following it. He may be motivated by external incentives as we saw, such as fear of punishment by the state, but not internally by the duty itself. Now ignorance belongs to the intellect, weakness to power, and malice to the will: good results from the entire cause, evil from any particular defect. We have invoked ignorance and weakness in explaining derelictions of duty above; amoralism flows from malice. In other words, morals/reasons internalism is defeasible through ignorance; reasons/motive internalism, through weakness; and overall morals/motive internalism, through malice.

In the first place, there may indeed be conflicts between duty and narrow happiness, but not between duty and true happiness, because adhering to the moral law and the holy will are constituent parts of true happiness. If there is in fact such an apparent clash, then the duty is not a bona fide duty after all. The amoralist cannot in the end maintain that *rationality* permits him to disregard his moral obligations. In any case, amoralism is a condition not where one puts some narrow self-interest above justice but where one acknowledges that it *makes sense* for him to be just yet ignores the call of his duty.

Amoralism is like knowing full well that $2 + 2 = 4$ or that $(a - b)(a + b) = a^2 - b^2$ but "not caring" and living one's life while ignoring these mathematical truths. Amoralism seems like the quintessence of apathy. But it belongs to a man to strive for happiness, even only apparent and illusory happiness afforded by sin; hence amoralism itself represents dire corruption of nature. If Crusoe knows that he should let Friday live for his own, Crusoe's, profit and is fully capable of controlling his passions but kills him anyway, what other than his self-hatred is manifest? Another name for self-hatred is simply *sloth* or aversion to or sorrow for one's own genuine good. Ignorance of morality

can be cured by argument; weakness, by self-discipline; but amoralism requires something more like an exorcism. Mises puts it this way: "It may be true that in the deepest recesses of man's soul there is a longing for the undisturbed peace and inactivity of a merely vegetative existence. But in living man these desires, whatever they may be, are outweighed by the urge to act and to improve his own condition. Once the forces of resignation get the upper hand, man dies; he does not turn into a plant."[4] Amoralism is plantlike and so inhuman existence as regards morality. Theists believe in something like the Christian God; atheists deny that such a God exists; and "apatheists" don't *care* if there is a God even if they think He exists. They wouldn't bother to give God the time of day. Since morality deals with fundamental human relations, not caring about it implies that one does not care that he is surrounded by *people*. For him, they may as well be decorations. Though sloth is a definite sin and thus occurs in people from time to time, amoralism in its pure form is so implausible as to be impossible for all practical purposes. Therefore, internalism stands.

Joyce proposes the possibility of a "purely evil" person who knows what is forbidden but intentionally seeks it out precisely because it is forbidden.[5] There might be something to it; one might want to flaunt his freedom from moral restraints and his contempt for the authorities. But such a person is decidedly less plausible in my system. Consider a purely *stupid* person who knows that stabbing oneself with a needle in the eye is stupid or imprudent but who does so precisely because it is stupid. He loves his stupidity and wants to brag about it to all concerned. I doubt that any such person has ever existed, or if he had, that he would have survived for longer than a single hour. But my proof of the immorality of various crimes hinges precisely on the imprudence of misusing human beings. For Crusoe to murder Friday is as dumb as stabbing oneself in the eye with a needle. Perhaps things are less clear in a large society: some gang members, they say, look forward to going to prison as a rite of passage and means to rising in the criminal hierarchy. But that betokens only that prison is an insufficient deterrent for these guys. Perhaps if gangsters were stabbed with needles in the eyes and blinded as punishment, then they would reform.

Defending externalism, Brink writes: "If… sympathy is… a deeply seated and widely shared psychological trait, then… the vast majority of people will have at least *some* desire to comply with what they perceive to be their moral obligations… Moral motivation, on such a view, can be widespread and predictable, even if it is nether necessary, nor universal, nor overriding."[6] On the theory herein presented, and contra Brink, morality internally by its very nature demands that one *acquire* sympathy (or disinterestedness or charity in my terms) if he does not have it or *strengthen* it if it is inadequate. Then actions done out of

sympathy will be prompted less by moral duty and more by desire (for narrow happiness). Brink must postulate a desire to do the right thing taken de dicto which as we have seen is an implausible fetish; rather there is a *duty* to *create* a desire to do the right thing taken *de re*.

In other words, externalists claim that some people, the amoralists, do not have the desire to do the right thing taken de dicto. But that desire is preposterous; *nobody* has it including the non-amoralists. So the externalist argument fails.

Moral goods are different from both physical and metaphysical goods. The motivation is via 2nd-order desires of what kind of person to be, what sort of things to be "into," and for an increase in one's capacity for narrow happiness. John Stuart Mill comments on the problem as follows:

> It is indisputable that the being whose capacities of enjoyment are low, has the greatest chance of having them fully satisfied; and a highly endowed being will always feel that any happiness which he can look for, as the world is constituted, is imperfect.
>
> But he can learn to bear its imperfections, if they are at all bearable; and they will not make him envy the being who is indeed unconscious of the imperfections, but only because he feels not at all the good which those imperfections qualify.[7]

2nd-order desires do not coerce 1st-order desires, unlike duties neither suppressing nor inflaming them. As regards *character*, a 2nd-order desire seeks to rearrange one's 1st-order value scales. It wishes that one make different choices than one actually makes. The idea is to effect a preference for virtuous actions. It may involve neglecting some 1st-order desires, as courage may counteract unwelcome fear, but only by casting one's options as if in a different light, such as where courage wins. Unlike a virtue, an art serves and fulfills one's existing preferences. Both virtues and arts are habits and perfections, and one can take pleasure in having both; an important difference, however, is that it is permissible to be a good doctor and hate doctoring, while it's not permissible to be prudent and hate prudence: as we have seen, virtues ought to be loved. Virtues are the beauty of the soul cultivated for their own sake; they can perfect and order the soul and remove obstacles to narrow happiness occasioned by exercise of arts and skills, but they cannot be assimilated to arts. One needs ideally or in principle to acquire all the virtues; it is sufficient under division of labor to master a single art. Pursuit of virtue demands, as part of knowing oneself, self-consciousness; pursuit of narrow happiness, on the contrary, self-forgetfulness. Virtue ethics is of course its own subject which is beyond the scope of this book; let me only restate here the distinction between

interpersonal justice which regards human relations and metaphysical goods and *metaphorical* justice which is one of the four cardinal virtues and a moral good. The latter may be the source of the unity of the virtues; it's not enough to *have* prudence, fortitude, and temperance, you need them working together as one, and when they do, you are also (metaphorically) just. As regards *self*, one aims to boost his receptivity for pleasure when 1st-order desires are satisfied. There is a desire to improve oneself such that one can "contain" more happiness. Hence the motivation is (1) desire-driven and Humean. Moreover, both virtues and the self are (2) objective: it is simply true that courage is a good and desirable character trait, just as the self already exists and stands ready to be explored. When Smith calls the steak at Barney's "nice," he may indeed be hailing it for some definite "objective" properties. But this sense of objectivity is a red herring. If Jones calls the same steak "bad" for the very same properties, he is not by that fact making any objective mistake, which is the sense of objectivity relevant to metaethics. The steak is objectively juicy yet subjectively physically good for Smith and subjectively bad for Jones. On the other hand, if Smith calls Robinson "virtuous" for his courage, while Jones calls him vicious, then Jones is objectively wrong. Robinson is objectively courageous and at the same time objectively morally good. Finally, moral goods are (3) externalist: no particular personal virtue *must* be pursued, even imperfectly, despite its objective goodness, since one needs to specialize even regarding character. So there is morals/reasons externalism. Maximization of pleasure is a necessary injunction of prudence, but no one is bound to maximize virtue or to develop the self to the maximum extent. So there is reasons/motive externalism. Duties by their nature *must* be done regardless of desires; 2nd-order desires vie for satisfaction with 1st-order desires. In other words, duties motivate by demanding that wicked desires be *dowsed* and not be felt at all; it's always an individual choice whether to seek the satisfaction of incompatible 2nd- or 1st-order desires, one of which is merely *set aside* and permissibly felt without, however, being favored. So again, creating and destroying desires is from duties; manipulating desires, such that one's value scales are altered *relatively* and more or less pleasure is felt from their satisfaction *absolutely*, is from 2nd-order desires; renouncing lower-ranked desires for the sake of higher-ranked ones is from 1st-order choices. Such is the system.

We know from economics that whatever an individual chooses, including pushpin, is by the very fact of having been chosen, in his own eyes, and ex ante superior in "pleasure" or utility or narrow happiness to all the alternatives set aside, including poetry. It may be that any man who refines his own soul will *in fact* prefer poetry to pushpin. In such a case, still poetry will be universally better than pushpin among the saints or at least among the sophisticated crowd though not objectively

better. This is fully consistent with our thesis that physical goods are judged subjectively. However, the *self* that prefers poetry may well be objectively morally superior, as in having more refined tastes, to the presumably philistine self that prefers pushpin.

To the question, "What right do you have to be happy?" an apt response is, so long as I stay within the law and do not merit punishment, "What reason do I have not to be?" Hazlitt (1998) was wise to distinguish between *asceticism* which seeks pain for its own sake and is therefore a form of insanity and *athleticism* which seeks, through discipline and training, to strengthen oneself and acquire moral goods in order to reap benefits in the form of physical goods and narrow happiness in the longer run. Any spiritual discipline aimed at vitalizing and honing the (2nd-level) chakras, as distinct from interpersonal justice and from stoking (3rd-level) charity, is basically a type of yoga. There are many kinds of it, owing to the complexity of the soul and body, and different things will work for different people. There may yet be a reconciliation between Hinduism and Christianity!

It may be true as we've seen that good character traits, especially as regards cardinal virtues, interdepend: a cowardly man is not prudent; nor a foolhardy man, courageous. Temperance ensures subordination of sensual appetite to intellectual appetite; metaphorical justice concerns the unity of or lack of contradictions within one's personal identity. But the choice still needs to be made at least at each moment, and the final product of this self-making will probably not feature a perfectly well-rounded, harmonious, and maximally actualized character. It is permissible to specialize: to focus on some aspects of the self while leaving others relatively undeveloped; to exercise some virtues at the exclusion of others. It may be good advice to work on your weaknesses only until they no longer threaten to ruin your life; once this is accomplished, work on your strengths. So, there is a limited measure of choice in how to sharpen one's self or natural gifts, interests, and tastes.

As a result, we may call virtues "objectively valuable," by which I mean that they ought to be *somewhere* on your value scales; you must at least consider them in your deliberations, even if in the end you will choose to forsake them for some other goods. You are free to allocate effort to virtues as you see fit; but you are not free to ignore their objective clout completely. Further, the skills and techniques you've mastered, your talents and powers, and the fervor of your passions and desires are objective because they are part of your self. You are free to choose *how* to enhance yourself, but you are not free to choose *whether*, lest you stay a child forever. Brink gives an example of Zelda whose "dominant goal" in life has been to "have the smallest handwriting. Though brimming with intellectual, creative, and social capacities, she ignored alternative careers and activities, family, and friends."[8] If

having the smallest handwriting is one's overriding obsession, he may as well have it satisfied. Arguably, however, Zelda has an impoverished and inferior personality and hence is morally evil.

For an illustration, consider an alcoholic's 1st-order desire to go from being sober to being drunk. His relevant 2nd-order desire would have nothing to do with alcohol but rather with his own self: it is to gain control over his habit. He wants to become *the kind of person* who can handle alcohol confidently. He may even be more specific and desire to become not a teetotaler, as often happens with real-life alcoholics who go straight, but a normal person who drinks – and enjoys drinking – in moderation. This way he does not wish to go from one objectionable extreme to another but to right his own character according to the golden mean. The 2nd-order desire is not the love of concupiscence that can be satisfied by an external good or service through any sort of economic progress. It belongs to the love of self. It's a desire not for the satisfaction of the topmost value on the scales but for better scales of value. Battles with addictions are particularly vivid examples of 2nd-order desires in action, (1) because addictions are vices of either incontinence or intemperance which are, though not the worst kind, still the most disgraceful and even comical kind (whereby a habitual drunkard may deserve to be laughed at derisively); (2) because they are so obviously inhuman, subjecting the mind to matter, rather than the reverse as befits us as men; and (3) because they are so visible to the public: it's hard to hide one's addiction and its consequences on health, work, finances, and so on. Hence, a desire to rid oneself of subservience to a substance, indeed a 2nd-order desire, strikes us as exceedingly reasonable.

David Lewis distinguishes between desire and "value" which he cashes out as "that which we are disposed, under ideal conditions, to desire to desire."[9] But this isn't *ethical* value, because morality is based on duties not 2nd-order desires including idealized. A 2nd-order desire has the leverage to alter the rankings of 1st-order desires, thereby changing what one chooses and what he sets aside. But a duty is much more crudely powerful, having the authority to crush desires including higher-level ones. For example, a coward may desire to be the sort of person who would be comfortable as a soldier in a war zone. He desires to desire to be a ferocious warrior. In response we may explain that "you shall not murder," and there go his vain aspirations.

We may with some difficulty be able to identify 3rd-order desires. A man is being persecuted for his faith; he wishes to avoid death as a 1st-order desire, wishes to be a fearless martyr as a 2nd-order desire, and wishes to be less fanatical and more solicitous about his temporal life as a 3rd-order desire. An addict craves his drugs, hates himself for his vice, but wishes he liked himself more despite it. This is getting convoluted;

and if the essence of 2nd-order desires is to make decisions one will not regret, then there are exactly two levels.

John Riker suggests that "for Aristotle all good persons are alike…; Aristotle's ethics cannot respond to issues of diversity – cannot respond to different groups of people valuing genuinely different forms of life," especially given "the radical individualism of modernity in which the singularity of each person is affirmed."[10] This is scarcely a problem for my system in which virtue is explicitly set off against on the one hand nature and on the other hand narrow happiness. As a result, when quizzed, "What's your poison?" nothing prevents St. Smith from saying "I study and collect butterflies"; St. Jones, "I am a Vegas high roller" (gambling as such is not a sin in Catholicism); and St. Robinson, "I love airplanes and flying them." Their pure *nature* and holy *character* – through which they are indeed somewhat, though hardly 100%, alike – are compatible with an immense variety of ways of pursuing *narrow happiness*, as well as of the environment including people around them in which this pursuit proceeds. It is God's will that man thoroughly enjoy his righteous and virtuous life. There is on this understanding no universal single end, no summum bonum for ethics to postulate other than the extremely formal "true happiness"; if there is such a thing (such as the Thomistic "sole contemplation of God seen in His essence"), it must be left to theology to expound. What ethics does is disallow a small number of certain ends that can be called sins; sins are to be neither pursued nor even desired. Though men do sin, sins are foreign to human nature rightly conceived; they are *inhuman* because they result in the end in one's own downfall. But which innocent ends out of their prodigious variety should be pursued ethics leaves to individual choice and pleasure. Objectivism about metaphysical and moral goods is consonant with political libertarianism, since the state, far from being any sort of tool of a mad philosopher for bullying people into leading "objectively good lives," is usually a deadly enemy of peace, prosperity, and human happiness. Now on the one hand, freedom of the will is the capacity for rational or purposive choice and is had by all humans. On the other hand, this freedom is often impeded by various vexing factors, just as freedom of action may be impeded by the state. As freedom of action is essentially permission (not to be confused with power) to act, so freedom of the will is permission to will, to desire. This permission can be external by duties and internal by 2nd-order desires. E.g., if you are trying to become a certain kind of person, it may occur to you that the kind of person you want to be does not choose the kinds of things you prefer now and hence set those things aside as inconsistent with your ideal self and character; this choice in itself will move you closer to the ideal. We can therefore say that our saints, by dint of the metaphysical clarity of their souls (i.e., their happy compliance with

their moral duties) and of the fact that their 2nd-order desires are satisfied (i.e., that they both are virtuous and know themselves), have unhindered free will.[a]

Metaethical externalists like Zangwill (2003) and Svavarsdottir (1999) confound metaphysical goods with moral goods. They postulate an overriding master 2nd-order desire to do the right things taken de dicto, call it 2D. We may, to preserve the analogy, consider this value objective in the sense that it ought to be had. Most people have 2D, though it is at least possible that there exist amoralists who do not. We may call 2D in our terms the desire for one's own metaphysical sanctity, for the goodness of one's own nature. The intellect then, upon acknowledging 2D, goes to work to discover the means to slaking it. If it decides that not stealing and even not wanting to steal are conducive to it, then it commands one not to steal, etc. Reason is still a slave, if only to this singular "moral" passion. Objectivity, Humeanism, and externalism are, as we have just seen, the marks of moral goods, that is, the goods of the personality's content. Now 2D can be either proximate or ultimate. The problem for the proximate sense is that desires for moral goods are quite properly actuated by love of *self*, by the desire for one's own spiritual beauty; but metaphysical holiness requires love for fellow men, for the *other*. One can become virtuous by thinking "I'll build myself up"; one cannot become a saint by focusing on himself. Other people ought to be loved as ends in themselves, not as means to one's own metaphysical perfection. One will not grow in love by thinking "I want to own more charity in my heart" and then proceed to work on this project as if he were filing tax returns; it is charity that owns you to which you surrender. 2D can be satisfied only by being forgotten. If you find yourself with this desire, the best thing you can do is get rid of it posthaste. So, in the proximate sense, 2D is positively vicious; at the very least it is something one cannot aim at directly. Therefore, it cannot explain moral motivation. On the other hand, in the ultimate sense, it is true that one's own interpersonal justice and charity are crucial ends and factors in one's true happiness. But this form of 2D proves not externalism but internalism *defeasible by malice* which here I take to be general self-hatred, for what else would we call the condition of someone who fails to will good to himself, be this good metaphysical, moral, or physical? In simple terms, then, *no one* has, or at least ought to have, 2D taken proximately; and (almost) *everyone* has 2D taken ultimately. The direct moral motivation in my system continues to be reason correcting the will through apprehending and enforcing moral duties.

The Humean theory of motivation, objectivism, and internalism are indeed incompatible with each other for all three of nature, personality, and narrow happiness trinities. For the heart, whether fair

or foul, yearns for its own things and cannot, on HUM, by necessity be swayed by intellectual judgments. Table 12 shows how this puzzle is to be solved.

Good	Properties		
Physical	HUM	Objectivism ~~Subjectivism~~	Internalism
Moral	HUM	~~Objectivism~~	Internalism ~~Externalism~~
Metaphysical	HUM ~~Duty-driven~~	Objectivism	~~Internalism~~
Divine	~~HUM~~	Objectivism	Internalism

Table 12. Solution to the moral problem.

The divine good reconciles all three attributes insofar as God is the "universal good that lulls the appetite altogether,"[11] and enjoyment of Him is the objective last end discernible and necessarily prescriptible by reason.

I must single out Michael Smith's treatise *The Moral Problem* as an excellent precursor to the arguments in this book. Our conclusions are similar. He defends morality's objectivity and internalism and advances an anti-Humean theory of motivation somewhat like my own. Smith distinguishes between motivating reasons which I call desire-driven motivation and normative reasons which correspond roughly to my duty-driven motivation. He, too, recognizes that desires can be created and destroyed by reason. One has a normative reason to φ, according to Smith, when he believes that he'd have the desire to φ under conditions of full rationality, however exactly spelled out. A profound question he asks is, "If we believe that we would desire to φ, if we were fully rational, and yet desire not to φ, can we see why we should get rid of the desire not to φ, and acquire the desire to φ, instead…?"[12] His answer is schematic: to do otherwise would be irrational. But why must I renounce my desire for not-φ just because some "fully rational" superman would desire φ? How is that person an authority for me? Why should I heed *him* as opposed to pursuing my own ends within my own however flawed self? By now the answer should be clear.

Footnotes

a. There is no need to expound on free will here at length. Certainly teleological determinism seems eminently compatible with freedom of the will. I am *free* because unlike merely material objects, I have permission from my nature (and often from external authorities) to choose between various courses of action. On the other hand, a

man can explain to others in considerable detail how he *determined* a particular choice or decision: what reasons pro and con for various alternatives he contemplated in his intellect and how he weighed them in his will. The man himself may have been caused by "nature," God (as to his soul), "nurture," and his past choices. As for praise and blame, one does not blame a stone for hitting him on the head because a stone is not the sort of thing that can be blamed: every stone is in itself perfectly adequate. Both a man and his actions, on the other hand, can fall short of what they ought to be, therefore be evil, therefore be blamed.

Endnotes

1. See Darwall, "Reasons, Motives, and the Demands of Morality" in Darwall, *Discourse*, 305-12.

2. *ST*, II-I, 90, 4, reply 1.

3. *HA*, 3.

4. *HA*, 882.

5. Joyce, *Myth*, 21.

6. Brink, *Moral Realism*, 49.

7. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Ch. 2.

8. Brink, *Moral Realism*, 227.

9. Lewis in Smith et al, "Dispositional Theories," 116.

10. Riker, *Good*, 5.

11. *ST*, II-I, 2, 8.

12. Smith, *Problem*, 177.

6. Naturalism: Fallacy, Shmallacy

As regards naturalism, we should not confuse metaethics with normative ethics. A theory like classical utilitarianism belongs to the latter. It would propose something like "Your moral duty is to maximize general happiness" which would be not a definition of the word "duty" but a statement in need of rigorous proof (which as it happens has never been supplied by anyone). Metaethics would ask rather "What is the meaning of the word 'duty'? Are there such things as duties or is the only duty to have fun and the only rule that there are no rules? Are moral duties objective, absolute, what? If there are duties, why must I do them?" and suchlike, as we have discussed. Utilitarianism then is not a "naturalist reduction" of ethics; it's a particular moral theory. If it *were* a reduction, that is, if it insisted that the term "duty" just meant "a course of action that maximizes general happiness," then it would be false. There is nothing unreasonable in my thinking that doing *X* will maximize happiness but being unconvinced that *X* is my duty or even being certain that *X* is explicitly immoral. Now my own view is that utilitarianism is implausible as a personal morality, as I show in my book on John Rawls.[1] But suppose there is a uniquely true version of normative ethics, specifically the natural law morality I have sketched above. Then as regards rendering a moral judgment as to what is right or wrong or a duty, given an exhaustive description of a situation which includes all the facts and values, the correct judgment supervenes on nature.

The problem of naturalism has two aspects. One is how goods come into existence as *goods*. Since our definitions of "good" include oughts, the issue comes down to the relationship between the ought and the is. Physical goods, in the first place, are loved. Thus, I might say: "I like my car." But it is surely above the nature of a merely physical object like a car that it is liked. The car is lifted above its definition via its material and efficient causes into having a final cause, a purpose for a human being. At the outset, then, goods cannot be reduced to the "is" of the merely physical world. Physical goods are not simply *things*. But on the other hand, there is nothing unnatural about humans, either, or about humans liking things. The distinction between "is" and "ought" is *not* the same as the distinction between fact and value. "My car is black" may be objective, and "my car is liked" may be subjective, but both reflect reality. The car's blackness has to do with the car's physical attributes (unless we cash "black" out as a quale), but that I like my car is also a full-fledged "fact" about the way things are, in this case, about

my sentiments. There is such a thing as human nature and such things as humans whose nature it is to like and dislike things. Thus, "I like my car" is as much a part of the "is" as "my car is black." Both my car's blackness and my car's being liked by me are *facts* of reality. Human affairs are fully part of the natural world. This restriction on the word "nature" to mean the object of study of *physics* is itself completely unnatural.[a] Second, then, that *X* which is loved ought to be suggests that the world is lacking in something and that I wish to change it to make it conform to my will. But that's beyond the nature of the world as it is now. It's only a possible world. Indeed, the process of choice which determines which attractive things ought to be and which not involves contemplation and weighing of possible worlds in the mind's eye. Now no third party can authoritatively determine what physical goods ought to be for you. The issue then regards whether human choices are determined. Suppose that compatibilism of free will and teleological determinism is true, such that if Smith at t_1 chooses *A* while setting aside *B*, thereby causing *A* to ought to be and *A* to be a physical good, then he would still choose *A* again and again if we could rewind the world back to t_1 and watch him choose a million times. In that case, the "ought" not only can be derived from the "is" but is completely *determined* by the is, and naturalism for physical goods is *ultimately* true (though *predicting* the ought need not be easy or even possible). If there is true randomness influencing our choices, then of course naturalism is false, since randomness is the opposite of nature which is orderly or abides by law or has a determinate form. If God through His grace always or sometimes collapses this randomness by noncoercively bending the will one way or another, then again there is no naturalism, since God is supernatural (as 3rd-grade goodness).

Metaphysical goods *are* and thereby are part of the "is"; and they *ought to be loved*, and man is the most important such good which we have proven above. That man ought to be loved self-interestedly is perfectly natural, being a demand not only of justice but at the limit also of practical rationality; that man ought to be loved self-sacrificially is a deliverance of divine grace and so is supernatural. Now some men further are better than others; saints love and hate wisely; sinners, foolishly. A "good man" then is distinguished by his virtues, especially theological ones like faith, hope, and charity or at least their natural counterparts. Intellectual and moral virtues play a key role, too. Even simpler, a man gets better as he approaches the state of true happiness. (A good knife is good at cutting as an external to it end; and a good man is good at being happy as his inner last end. See also Table 8.) These qualities are surely natural, as are their corresponding vices; hence the goodness or wickedness of an individual supervenes on natural facts. Since such goodness is objective, there is also a stronger relation of

entailment: it is a genuine mistake to call a virtuous or truly happy man "bad." To the extent that some virtues and "gifts of the Holy Spirit" are infused into the soul by the grace of God, one's goodness can be supernatural. That both *X* and *Y* are metaphysical goods does not mean that they ought to be loved *equally* insofar as "good men" are metaphysically better than "bad men," even if it remains that *all* men are to be loved.

So, making choices regarding physical goods involves contemplation of *possibilities*, of abstracta. This contemplation is *timeless*. To the extent that possible worlds are disconnected from reality such that for them the imagination can run wild, physical goods are *proximately* **nonnatural**. The emergence of moral goods involves an actualization of *potentialities*, an unrolling or unfolding, both orderly and creative, of a "purpose within," of human potential contained in one in an embryonic form. Such growth and development are focused on the *future*. A potency is much more definite than a mere possibility; there are limits to the kinds of fully actualized things the former can become. These human potencies are no less natural than potential energy in physics. Moral goods can be called **seminatural**. Metaphysical goods are rooted in the *actuality* of the *past*. The metaphysical goodness of a man depends on what he has done. For that reason, children, though human, instead of being metaphysically good, are metaphysically innocent. Metaphysical goods, along with the moral law that specifies how such goods are to be treated, are fully **natural**. Finally, the divine good is also *actual*, lives in the (eternal) *present*, and consists in God granting to His creatures a measure of beatitude that imitates God's own perfect exultation in His own life. The divine good is of course **supernatural**.

In the function $y = x^3$, x supervenes on y; but in $y = x^2$ it does not, because the same $y = 4$ yields more than one different x: $+2$ and -2. Supervenience is a weaker relation than necessitation. Under necessitation, if a, b are (natural) N, then they must be (moral) M in all possible worlds. By contrast, supervenience allows possible world W_1 in which a, b are N and M_1; and world W_2 in which p, q are N and M_2; what's the reason, Simon Blackburn asks, for the ban on mixed worlds in which a, p are N, a is M_1, and p is M_2?[2] My reply is that N must be taken pretty comprehensively as comprising the complete description of the nature of the world including of man as well as of the moral situation under consideration. N is all the features of each possible world exhaustively listed, though the worlds can perhaps differ in their actual history. N cannot be found in just any old world; the fact that a, p are N already makes W_1 and W_2 rather similar. If W_1 is our world, and W_2 is a world where love is against the law, then the moral status of murder might indeed vary between these worlds, but since W_1 and W_2 would not share the same nature, the nature of murder would also be different

and not be the same N across them. If we hold the moral theory (or theories) used to evaluate a and p fixed, then it is permissible to upgrade supervenience to necessitation. The necessitation can work via a priori deduction as we have seen, so the moral properties are not *identical* to natural properties but are rationally *deducible* from them.

An illustration might be physical modality. Let the observable qualities of substances supervene on their inner structure. Then in our world, H_2O as a, b must be water, but perhaps in W_2, H_2O as p, q must be a poisonous gas. The reason for the ban on mixed world W_3 in which a, p are H_2O, a is water, and p is gas is that there can be only one set of natural laws that governs each world. There is no way for the law of W_3 to distinguish between a and p and cause them to behave differently. Indeed, that's the definition of chaos! In virtue of this, in W_3, a, p must be one definite thing: it could be water or gas or some third thing, but it must be the same throughout W_3.

Blackburn further argues that moral realism cannot account for both supervenience and *lack* of entailment from the natural to the moral. The latter is presented as (E) "There is no moral proposition whose truth is entailed by any proposition ascribing naturalistic properties to its subject."[3] That may be, but it doesn't have to: even a theory as primitive as simple cognitivist subjectivism, as have seen, easily denies (E): the property of (moral) rightness of X is instantiated whenever the speaker or agent has the (natural) feeling of approval of X. My own theory rejects (E), as well. I don't mean of course that "moral rightness" and "adherence to natural law" are synonymous – one can't find this definition in the dictionary, so they don't *mean* the same thing. Rather they have the same *reference* – X is morally right if and only if X complies with the natural law, and in addition, compliance with natural law grounds or is the reason for moral rightness. For example, "evening star" and "morning star" have different meanings, but there exists an X (specifically planet Venus) such that "X is a morning star" ↔ "X is an evening star." The "naturalistic fallacy" would be committed only by someone who failed to distinguish between meaning and reference.[4] It might of course be asked what the reference of moral properties like rightness is. The meaning of a word is what it tells you about the ideal form or essence in your mind; the reference is the real thing to which this essence may or may not correspond. The reference of rightness is the moral law; the moral law is part of the natural law; and though natural law is not matter, is not the material cause of things, it is for all that no less real, being the *efficient* cause of the universe. The moral law, despite the fact that we can't perceive it with our five senses, informs this world and structures the way it works in much the same way as the laws of physics do.

In other words, "ought" statements appear at first glance to be

nonnatural, since positive science investigates what *is*, not what *ought to be* or *ought to be loved*. Nevertheless, positive determinations of oughts are possible; for moral goods, we can identify virtues and discern the self; for metaphysical goods, we can prove what things are intrinsically and objectively valuable. Consider hypothetical imperatives: if I *am* hungry, then I *ought* to eat something. Which science can prove this statement? But if we rephrase it as "eating is a means to alleviating hunger," then by willing the end, I by the command of practical reason also will the means. What's so unnatural about that? Now ethics is neither physics nor even economics, but it is a social science that deals with the nature of man, and hence is not "nonnatural." Nor does ethics cease to be natural simply by virtue of its a priori methodology.

Goodness	Essence	Real Existence	Evil	Essence	Real Existence
Physical			Physical		✓
Moral	✓		Moral	✓	
Metaphysical	✓	✓	Metaphysical	✓	
Divine		✓	Divine		✓

Table 13. Essence and existence of different goods and evils.

The second aspect of naturalism concerns, once we have a good or evil, whether it has an essence and real existence. Table 13 summarizes. *Physical* goods *as objects*, this cup, this pen, manifestly have both essence and existence. But not *as goods*. An item is a physical good only because it is loved, and this ideal feeling that confers goodness, like all abstracta, has no essence. And it is a physical good only if it ought to be or ought to continue to be. In both cases it ought to be in the future, at least in the very next moment. The goodness of a physical good abides either in the past or in the future not in the present. But only present, and not past or future, things exist. Again, the light of my lamp exists now, and the pleasure I derive from it exists now, but the goodness of the light does not, it wends its way from the past to the future without touching the present. The light *is* right now; it makes no sense to say that the light *ought to be* right now, and it is the latter that would need to be true for the light's goodness to exist right now. Physical goodness is a feeling that refers to a future state of affairs. This is a little counterintuitive but follows from the definition.

Likewise, physical evil is evil by virtue of being hated, the opposite feeling, and again has no essence. But on the contrary it is hated insofar as it is present right now, hence it exists. It is precisely its presence that is being rejected.

Metaphysical goods, especially human beings, are and so exist and ought to be loved in proportion to the richness and splendor of their

essence. Metaphysical evil is sin or corruption of nature and is parasitic on the good: it is absence of good that ought to be there. “Evil is not of itself knowable, forasmuch as the very nature of evil means the privation of good, therefore evil can neither be defined nor known except by good.”[5] A mere lack of something does not exist, but any privation, such as yin without yang, can be precisely specified and thus has an essence.

Moral goods and evils have essences since both virtues and vices, both primitive and complex selves are well-defined. But being mere terms for configurations of the soul, they do not really exist.

Lastly, as we saw in Section 1.3., God is materially simple, efficiently free (on all three levels), finally happy (on the 2nd and 3rd levels), and formally good (on the 3rd level, specifically the Father). The first two generate no essence, there is nothing to *describe*. The third is an internal act (God’s delight in being God), the fourth external act (the Father communicating His perfections first to the Son and second to creatures), neither of which can be called essence.

Divine evil is twofold: general, consisting in God’s inability to grant His creatures the 3rd level (so things are *like* God only up to His 2nd level), and peculiar to humans, insofar as man is a hybrid creature who could not, try as God might, be made impervious to sin. These circumscribe even God’s own ad extra omnipotence. Divine goodness is God bestowing being and holiness on others. Divine evil is certain limitations on this process, and it’s likewise essenceless. But it is real, exists, and its consequences are felt, e.g., God paid for the second aspect of His own evil through the Passion of Christ.

Footnotes

a. Of course, I don’t *have to* like or dislike anything. Being presented with a car does not compel my feelings either way. So, liking the car does not “reduce” to the physical properties of the car. The final cause of the car does not supervene on the material and efficient causes, but rather the reverse, as we established in Section 1.4. On the other hand, two identical cars would be parts of the same economic supply, and I’m indifferent between them. If I like one at time *t*, I’ll also like other at *t*, and vice versa.

Endnotes

1. Chernikov, *Distribute*, Ch. 2.

2. Blackburn, *Spreading*, 185.

3. Blackburn, “Moral Realism” in *Essays*, 116.

4. See Reken, *Principia*, for a fuller discussion.

5. *ST*, I, 14, 10, reply 4.

7. Failing to Compute

J.L. Mackie's "error theory" that consists in denying that there exist objective goods or objective moral imperatives is now a standard option in metaethics and is discussed in every introductory textbook.

Westermarck may have qualified as an early error theorist, declaring that "if, as I maintain, the objective validity of all moral valuation is an illusion, and the proposition 'this is good' is meant to imply such validity, it must always be false… just as the proposition 'the sun sets' was always false in those days when everybody believed that it was the sun and not the earth that moved."[1] But he was more obviously an explicit subjectivist than Mackie.

Another perhaps surprising error theorist was Ludwig von Mises; or rather the error theory follows from his economic writings. Mises considered ethics to be a pseudo philosophy and disparaged "ethical doctrines" liberally. It was not, in his opinion, a legitimate branch of human inquiry. Contrary to popular interpretation, Mises was not a "preference utilitarian" in ethics. Utilitarianism is probably the most preposterous moral theory ever devised by man. Certainly Mises did not believe a notion so absurd as that it is every man's (including his own) moral duty to maximize the sum total of satisfied preferences. Now utilitarianism *can* be used to evaluate systems of positive law for how well they tend to promote social cooperation. And Mises did suggest that "democratic government, private property, freedom, and equality under the law" favored "social utility."[2] But even here Mises did not argue for laissez-faire capitalism on the grounds that it was a utilitarian economic system. It's not that socialism is less productive than capitalism; it's that it's impossible. It's not that interventionism is less productive than capitalism; it's that it's unstable and is a mere way station on the path toward socialism. Mises held that "there are in this world no ends the attainment of which is gratuitous."[3] He was an admirer of Hume and would have been aware of Hume's idea that even the destruction of the whole world need not be "contrary to reason." He echoes Hume: "To apply the concept *rational* or *irrational* to the ultimate ends chosen is nonsensical."[4] "[T]he ultimate ends of human action are not open to examination from any absolute standard."[5] Hence Mises would not have believed that the end of destroying the world was in any way *evil*; it was just another ultimate given not open to any criticism, including moral. There is, on this stance, nothing whatsoever wrong with Marvin the Martian who wants to blow up Earth just because it obstructs his view of Venus. Mises, far from being a utilitarian, rejected all forms of ethics as

garbage. Thus, he would have agreed with Mackie that all atomic ethical propositions are uniformly false because they involve a presupposition failure, a false assumption of some objective values that can be used to evaluate and critique individual subjective values.[a] This interpretation helps to explains why it fell upon Mises' friend Henry Hazlitt who actually *was* a utilitarian to write *The Foundations of Morality*, while Mises never bothered to say anything on this subject.

Error theory is a kind of amoralism. Amoralism, which says "Whatever feels good, do it," is a philosophical doctrine; immoralism, which says "Shock the bourgeoisie," is a personal lifestyle. An amoralist need not be immoral, and an immoralist need not adhere to amoralism. Yet this creed does not deserve much respect, and the challenges it poses will be answered presently.

The claim to objectivity, Mackie admits, is part of the meaning of "basic, conventional" moral terms. Yet this, he avouches, is a mistake for several reasons. First, because of widespread moral disagreement: "The argument from relativity has as its premise the well-known variation in moral codes from one society to another and from one period to another, and also the differences in moral beliefs between different groups and classes within a complex community."[6] Now obviously there are disagreements about all sorts of presumed facts of reality, but that does not mean there are no right – and objective – answers. Mackie's reply is exceedingly simple (and exceedingly cynical): people morally approve of whatever they enjoy, e.g., "people approve of monogamy because they participate in a monogamous way of life rather than that they participate in a monogamous way of life because they approve of monogamy."[7] In short, "there are radically divergent preferences and values, and it is from these that obstinate moral disagreements arise."[8]

In the first place, if that were true, it would be hard to make sense of moral disagreement as such. No one argues whether soup is objectively better than sandwiches. It's a matter of taste; some prefer soup, others sandwiches; the preferences vary both for different people and for the same person at different times. The consumer desires for both can coexist and be satisfied simultaneously. Even if there was a miraculous convergence, such that all members of some society said they preferred soup, it would not make their choice objectively correct. But people – and philosophers – do argue about normative and applied ethics as if it were important to see these things as they are. The fact that ethics remains a branch of philosophy and that people argue about it with considerable passion and subtlety suggests that there is more to it than a pointless clash of mere subjective and arbitrary values. Mackie writes, for example, without sensing the irony that "mutual toleration might be easier to achieve if groups could realize that the ideals which

determine their moralities in the broad sense are just that, the ideals of those who adhere to them, not objective values which impose requirements on all alike."[9] But why ought anyone to strive for mutual toleration? Is that an objective value or merely Mackie's own fanciful "ideal"? Isn't peace, as a relation, objectively superior to war?

Mackie himself thinks that morality is for the most part a social convention, a set of institutions dependent only on human positive arbitrary will. That view might be defensible if man were omnipotent and could alter the way nature itself worked, facing no limitations to the satisfaction of his desires from nature including his own. Our author acknowledges his adversary's position, describing it as that "some legal principles are valid in themselves without having to be made, and are therefore valid at all times and in all communities, that they can be discovered by reason, and moreover that they control and limit positive law…"[10] He rejects it simply as a "corollary" of his dismissal of ethical objectivism.

Perhaps subjectivism may be taken this way: call each person's desires as to his own personal pleasures the domain of "economics." Call further his preferences as to how *other people* should act the realm of "politics." In politics then we apply a sort of "social pressure" on each other. "There ought to be a law," we declare, perhaps rather rashly. The obvious difference between economics and politics is that for the former, in a free society, all preferences can be catered to at the same time. I can enjoy my soup, and you can enjoy your sandwich undisturbed. But as regards politics, if I feel that eating sandwiches is bad and would like to outlaw this practice, and you'd prefer to continue eating sandwiches unimpeded, then we are directly in conflict. There can only be one set of coercive laws on the books. Either the state punishes sandwich-eaters, or there is freedom. Either way, the interests of one of us are frustrated. At the very least, there must be a procedure for determining who will rule. If there is some sort of democracy, such that bullets are replaced with ballots, then the outcome will depend on the majority's volatile passions. More plausibly, regardless of the political system, the state's police powers will be unleashed against those the state hates. It is futile to discuss if eating sandwiches is permissible or wrong; or whether outlawry of sandwiches is just or unjust. For the "anethicist" like John Burgess there can be no justice, natural law, or duties; there is only power, indeed there is nothing else.[11] It's not even that might makes right; might is simply a brute fact not amenable to evaluation as right or wrong.

Mackie's subjectivism is absolutist or universalizable, but this amalgam is far-fetched. Why should I fit my preferences into the Procrustean bed of universal maxims? Why should other people abide by the maxims I personally live by? The principle of universalizability is

a logical thesis, Mackie seems to claim, but I fail to see the logic. If natural law is admitted, the proof of universalizability is easy: all humans share the same nature and therefore whatever the natural law stipulates applies to all humans. But if morality is a positive convention, I see no reason to bother universalizing my values. It might even be wrong in some sense to impose my arbitrary moral views on others. Why can't each person simply do as he likes?

Mackie has an objection to his own argument: "the true purpose of human life is fixed by what God intended (or, intends) men to do and to be. Actual human strivings and satisfactions have some relation to this true end because God made men for this end and made them such as to pursue it." His reply is: "I concede that if the requisite theological doctrine could be defended, a kind of objective ethical prescriptivity could be thus introduced. Since I think that theism cannot be defended, I do not regard this as any threat to my argument."[12] The objection is a straw man because it confuses the Author of nature with the nature's law. Thus, Mackie's rejoinder is irrelevant: even if he dismissed God, the natural law would not thereby lose its existence or its dominion. This law governs us and is something to which we must submit. It is a *vice-regent of God* and hence deserving of dulia-reverence if not, as God, of latria-worship. Rothbard sums up the point nicely as follows: "The statement that there is an order of natural law, in short, leaves open the problem of whether or not God has created that order; and the assertion of the viability of man's reason to discover the natural order leaves open the question of whether or not that reason was given to man by God. The assertion of an order of natural laws discoverable by reason is, by itself, neither pro- nor anti-religious."[13]

There are several reasons why moral disagreement persists under objectivity. One is the continuing controversies in positive sciences, especially economics. We have seen how much ethics depends on getting economics right. For example, exchanging goods would seem to be a natural right. But many socialists have denied that and conjured up utopian communities in which trade between citizens would be prohibited under penalty of death. If it can be proven that socialism is hopeless, then ethical progress will ensue.

Another concerns ideology as we have defined it. Autarkic warfare between isolated families, primitive communism, feudalism, and capitalism generate completely different ethical systems. An upgrade in ideology thus causes the entire prevailing moral code to be transcended. In particular, in the present day, with the whole world seemingly slowly and in fits and starts moving toward capitalism and free trade, despite all economic sabotage by governments, with their concomitant human and property rights, we should be witnessing a gradual elimination of the most serious moral disagreement.

Then there is the fact that human beings are sinners, and sin clouds the mind both in the sense that St. Thomas believed lust clouded understanding and in the sense that it is difficult to be a committed hypocrite: it is very likely that eventually one will come to preach precisely the evil things he practices. As we have seen, being moral often has distinct costs in terms of narrow happiness; at the same time persisting in sin also has costs in terms of corruption of nature, guilt, and so on. Perhaps an attractive way of avoiding the costs is to convince oneself that immoral actions are moral after all. It's easier to think that abortion is wrong in normal times than when your girlfriend whom you're just using for sex gets pregnant. It is plausible that this phenomenon can explain an appreciable amount of moral disagreement.

We may allude to moral dilemmas. (1) There is a difference between natural and Christian morality, and these can clash. An evil colonel has kidnapped 11 people; he's about to execute them when he offers you a choice: if you kill one of them, then he'll let the other 10 go. What do you do? Natural morality bids one not to murder but does not require one to save lives. One might thus legitimately refuse the offer. But Christian morality demands than one do good deeds and save lives. (2) There is a difference between personal love and universal benevolence toward mankind. If the person the colonel is asking you to sacrifice for the sake of the 10 is your own wife or child, what then? (3) There is a difference between evil intent and good consequences. You are a doctor who can save a certain patient Smith. Yet if you let Smith die, then you can harvest his organs to implant them into and therefore save 10 other people. Even supposing in this scenario it's not your professional duty to save Smith, and given that his death is a means to saving the 10 (which is relevant to double effect), are you permitted to do nothing? Dilemmas seem to feature genuine indeterminacy; they are gray areas where the light of reason does not fully penetrate. But disagreement about *them* is hardly indicative of global failure.

Kellenberger has remarked that underneath the different lifestyles of different cultures there are often the same values. Both the Eskimo who practiced assisted suicide of the aged and our contemporary American mores according to which old people are stuffed into nursing homes where they rot out of sight while devouring other people's taxes manifest "an underlying value of caring for the aged." Likewise for "being friendly, keeping a promise *if* a promise is made, not violating the requirements of the marital relationship." The Dinka tribe, despite acting on some dubious beliefs about the supernatural, "values the same thing that we do in mainstream American culture: the maintenance of life and the maintenance of the well-being of the community. The difference is over a factual belief about what is necessary to further that end." It may be an absolute moral rule that one shall not offend others

unnecessarily, even though what counts as offensive will vary from culture to culture. (Giving gratuitous offense involves showing contempt for the other and, though, as speech, not naturally unlawful, can still harm relations.) Even anthropologists "recognize as universals the wrongness of murder and of incest, the prohibition of not telling the truth, the rightness of restitution and reciprocity, and the obligations of parents toward their offspring and of offspring toward their parents."[14] It is true that the ways these moral duties are fulfilled may be based on false information or otherwise ineffective or even tragic. But that the duties hold universally (and therefore perhaps objectively) is undisputed.

This argument should not be taken too far. Both an honest businessman and a man who kills his aunt for inheritance share the "underlying value" of financial success. That does not mean they are "really" alike morally. Hitler valued the strength and vigor of the race; today's doctors and fitness trainers do the same; do their "good intentions" equalize their moral worth? The means to one's however commendable ends, too, can be reprehensible. Sidgwick considered most historical moral codes, however diverse, to be attempts, more or less well executed, at crafting a utilitarian system aimed at promoting general happiness; and he believed that the commonsense morality of his own day was "inchoately and imperfectly Utilitarian." The hypothesis that there are forces driving law and morality ever closer to efficiency (at serving the greatest good for the greatest number) is dubious: witness, for example, the recent cruel tyranny of the former Soviet Union, the "land of the knout and the prison-camp," as Mises called it. Even granting it, we cannot ignore both the possibility and actuality of terrible mistakes along the way. Incidentally, I disagree with Kellenberger that both monogamy and polygamy can be moral as long as both stipulate marital fidelity. Polygamy raises a men's rights issue, because it, by laws of arithmetic, condemns many men to not having a spouse. These unlucky men remain desperate and dangerous to social order. St. Thomas argued that having multiple wives is contrary to family peace: "since one husband cannot suffice to satisfy the requisitions of several wives, and again because the sharing of several in one occupation is a cause of strife…"[15] For these reasons, and perhaps a few others, polygamy is a vicious institution.

Another interpretation of the argument from disagreement is that even philosophers disagree; what's more, they disagree not just on substantive issues but even on the method of doing ethics. Whatever there is to this objection, philosophers who publish opinions on applied ethics are not just talking past each other; they are engaged in a genuine debate. Even if this debate touches on method, it's still part of philosophy where truth is the prize.

Finally, ethics is complicated, and people are not all equally qualified to reason about it. Later philosophical progress may bring clarity to these matters. Brink (1989) suggests, for example, that moral philosophy is a neglected field of study, and most laymen seem uninterested in availing themselves of the advances made in it anyway. Mises wrote that economics

> must not be relegated to classrooms and statistical offices and must not be left to esoteric circles. It is the philosophy of human life and action and concerns everybody and everything. It is the pith of civilization and of man's human existence. …
>
> Whoever neglects to examine to the best of his abilities all the problems involved voluntarily surrenders his birthright to a self-appointed elite of supermen. …
>
> The public discussion of economic problems ignores almost entirely all that has been said by economists in the last two hundred years.[16]

Perhaps ethics is in a similar spot.

In particular, Tamara Horowitz relates an "experiment" by Kahneman and Tversky in which two groups of subjects were presented with identical scenarios regarding the choice of the best policy in the face of a certain disease. The only difference was that one group had the scenario phrased in terms of the number of people saved, and the other, in terms of the number of people dying. The responses differed, seemingly due to these irrelevant variations in framing the problem. This, it is suggested, throws doubt on the idea that our moral "intuitions" are reliable.[17] The apropos rebuttal seems to be to agree that framing effects can deceive people, especially young students who must have been the subjects, but counter that the *experimenters themselves* surely were not deceived. It may take a semester to pound the quadratic formula into the heads of students. This does not mean there are no right answers in math. Why should any error theory follow from framing mistakes? I agree that wisdom is not innate but must be taught. Even cats who are domesticated animals must be properly socialized from birth in order to mature into pets. Could the experiment refute the idea that some moral judgments are self-evident? In the first place, even if moral intuitions are a shaky source of moral knowledge, we need not rely on them; we can develop our ethics a priori by contemplating man's nature in the world. Secondly, moral reasoning is less precise than math. Why not argue that basic moral judgments are *almost* self-evident, or simply that the scenarios used by Horowitz are actually somewhat complex?

Mackie second argument is from "queerness." The metaphysical part of it is that "if there were objective values, then they would be

entities or qualities or relations of a very strange sort, utterly different from anything else in the universe."[18] But if we understand man himself to be the preeminent metaphysical and objective good, then this objection is immediately undone. It may be true that man is "the glory, jest, and riddle of the world," as Alexander Pope called him, but there is nothing queer about him otherwise. Or, from Shakespeare now, "What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world. The paragon of animals." Sophocles in *Antigone*, Pascal in *Pensées*, Kant[b] gave tribute to man. Even if man is a queer sort of creature, a unique species which is a rational animal, such that the moral requirements of his nature, too, are queer, still the error theory of ethics does not follow from this. An objective value would be that man ought to love his fellow men. The love that Smith feels for Jones is of course subjective, but Jones himself is an objective *good*, and that Smith ought to love Jones is Smith's objective *moral duty*. (Korsgaard (1996) is the only other philosopher I'm aware of who seems to grasp this point.)

Again, from God's point of view, *everything* ought to be loved (by Him); all creatures in their pure state, even, say, viruses, are metaphysically good and are loved, though unequally: God loves more the better things. From man's point of view, viruses can be hated as his natural enemies, but all humans are natural friends and are to be loved. Of course, just as water is "evil" for causing drowning yet "good" for drinking, so even viruses are not unequivocally "evil." They harm men by making them sick, but the insights into the workings of nature our study of them reveals may prove useful in our technology. Moore asks, given two possible worlds, one very beautiful and the other very ugly, "supposing them quite apart from any possible contemplation by human beings; still, is it irrational to hold that it is better that the beautiful world should exist, than the one which is ugly? Would it not be well, in any case, to do what we could to produce it rather than the other? Certainly I cannot help thinking that it would…"[19] From the omniscient God's standpoint, from whose sight no world could escape, it might; from man's, under the conditions stipulated, not really. The beautiful world is a physical good, and a necessary requirement for there to be any physical good is that it be enjoyed by a human being.

Mackie goes on: "… something's being good both tells the person who knows this to pursue it and makes him pursue it. An objective good would be sought by anyone who was acquainted with it, not because of any contingent fact that this person, or every person, is so constituted that he desires this end, but just because the end has to-be-pursuedness somehow built into it."[20] But an objective good is not an end to be "pursued"; it's a *thing* and in particular a human being that is valuable in

itself. A man therefore does not have "to-be-pursuedness built into him"; he has "to-be-feltness-charity-for" built into him. He is objectively, independently of our *actual* attitudes, to be loved with *philia* according to natural morality and with *agape* according to Christian morality. This notion is surely accessible to us: righteous living at least by nature and even by divine grace is fully within both the apprehension and reach of every man. The judgment of a human being as valuable in himself or metaphysically good compels our emotions or would always if we were not sinners. Thus, "you shall not kill" your neighbor is a proposition whose reasonableness constitutes an objective-real moral value. It is objective because mind-independent: everyone is obligated to love their neighbors. It is real, because the goodness of a human being which births our metaphysical-moral duties inheres in him – it's out there.

For error theorists, the explanation of the persistent error of considering morality to be objective is vicious objectification: torturing the cat is not *really* wrong; the wrongness of this is just a projection of our discomfiture or horror or, in Hume's words, "gilding and staining all natural objects with the colors borrowed from internal sentiment."[21] This is of course a confusion between metaphysical and physical goods. With physical goods, projection is exactly what we do. "There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so," Shakespeare wrote, though not entirely coherently. This cup of coffee is not really good (see Chapter 6); I call it good because it satisfies some desire of mine. Nor is its goodness objective; it is good only because it brings about subjective pleasure to me and perhaps to no one else. Physical goods then, far from being objective-real, are in fact subjective-ideal. We are value-givers. Moral goods are objective-ideal for reasons we have already rehearsed. Is the divine good then subjective-real, the last remaining permutation? This seems to be just the case: God is really good, but it's up to us to affirm the life He has given us.[c]

In general, all natural law has an aspect of objective prescriptivity: nature, Francis Bacon pointed out, in order to be commanded, must be obeyed. Such obedience is precisely what makes success possible. No engineer or craftsman can work haphazardly, ignoring the fundamental requirements of his art. But humans have a definite nature, too, and in order to keep up economic growth, they must heed its powers and constraints. This nature's exceeding complexity is no excuse for being lazy at studying it. Humans as a species cannot at the same time both enjoy a progressing civilization and indulge in a wild orgy of war and destruction. And a man as an individual must decide whether to cultivate charity which, by connecting him to other branches of humanity and the vine of divinity, nourishes his own soul; or hatred for fellow men which will ruin him in the end. There is nothing mysterious or queer about the thorough

incompatibility of these alternatives.

The choice is dire. With even a single crime one cuts himself off from the whole of mankind. As he unjustly hurts one man, so he is inevitably prepared to hurt anyone in the same position. And as the victim can strike back, so can any other member of society in the execution of justice. Even if a given gangster in a large society is for a time evading capture, his soul is detached from the vine and is rotting despite his dubious prudence. He is a spiritual zombie and will wither soon enough.

The epistemological part of the argument from queerness is that our awareness of objective values "would have to be by some special faculty of moral perception or intuition, utterly different from our ordinary ways of knowing everything else."[22] But of course the enigmatic faculty has been known since time immemorial as *wisdom*, by which I mean theoretical wisdom as an intellectual virtue as distinct from practical wisdom or prudence as a moral virtue which concerns itself with maximization of profit or narrow happiness. What is wisdom? St. Thomas answers: "it belongs to wisdom to consider the highest cause. By means of that cause we are able to form a most certain judgment about other causes, and according thereto all things should be set in order."[23] But setting things in order means grasping the *relations* between them, in particular, between God, men, and nature. Thus, we can say that the master / slave relation is less just than the tax-lord / tax-serf relation which in turn is less just than the relations between members of a capitalist society. Even the dictionary definition can suffice: wisdom is "ability to discern inner qualities and relationships." Wisdom is not moral intuition, though it can make use of intuitions which Huemer (2005) calls intellectual appearances. We establish the proper relations between men by deductive reasoning on the basis of the axioms of human nature we easily detect such as through introspection and empirical observation. Ethics then is a branch of understanding and wisdom that considers the inevitable limitations that the nature of humans and of the world around them imposes on them and the interhuman relations that this nature necessitates and justifies. There is nothing queer about that, either. Wisdom is seeing things as they are and as they are interrelated; it is knowledge of good and evil including the metaphysical kind; and charity is feeling toward those things as one ought. The fruit of wisdom and charity is fear of the moral law.

If one does want to appeal to intuition, then he may take recourse to the Scholastic notion of "synderesis" which is the disposition of grasping the moral fundamentals. According to Thomas Slater,

> In the field of moral conduct there are similar first principles of action, such as: "Evil must be avoided, good done"; "Do not to others what you would not wish to be done to

> yourself"; "Parents should be honored"; "We should live temperately and act justly." Such as these are self-evident truths in the field of moral conduct which any sane person will admit if he understands them.[24, d]

The argument here would be something like this:

1. "Parents should be honored" is self-evidently true.
2. Hence there exists at least one true moral proposition.
3. Therefore, the error theory is false.

Hare attacks a straw man by arguing that the proposition "I should not lie here and now" is weaker than "I should never lie," and if the former is in doubt, then a fortiori, so is the latter. Therefore, there are no self-evident general rules, since most particular cases are morally nontrivial.[25] Unfortunately, Hare was deceived by his logical positivism. No one would maintain that "parents should be honored" is an inductive generalization of the sort we discussed earlier, either of reason or of faith, in which general propositions are derived from particular observations. We do not induce that parents should be honored generally by watching numerous people decide that their parents should be honored on various actual occasions. We *see* instead that life is a great good, and so is the care that our parents take of us over many years, and those who selflessly created, nurtured, guarded, and guided and thus blessed us deserve reverence and gratitude. It's a *fitting*, and therefore *just*, response, and justice is a virtue. This proposition is self-evident both in the sense that its truth is evident by itself without the need for derivation (I don't in fact know what more I can say to attest to it) and in the sense that even a child can grasp it.

Wisdom then is a *power* of the intellect; synderesis, a *habit*, as in actual understanding of first principles which can be greater or smaller; and conscience is an *act* of applying such principles to a particular case.

Regarding the wrongness of deliberate cruelty, for example, "something must be postulated which can see at once the natural features that constitute the cruelty, and the wrongness, and the mysterious consequential link between the two."[26] Insofar as this is self-evident, no proof is needed; if Mackie insists, the proof is straightforward, e.g.: people in a small society always and even in the short run, and people in a large society generally and in the longer run, are natural friends with each other. Peace on earth, etc. benefit each individual as regards his *true* if not always *narrow* happiness; they ultimately serve all concerned. Deliberate cruelty is both a sign of self-hatred or madness and worsens these afflictions as a cause of them in its own right. It worsens them more to the extent that it is gloated over. (We have seen the tight link in both directions between external deeds and feelings of the heart.) In addition, Smith the wise lets Jones live and

be entitled to natural rights because this is in the rightly understood interests of Smith who is aware of the metaethics and demonstrations advanced in this book. But if Jones starts inflicting deliberate cruelties on Smith, Smith may decide that Jones is his enemy after all, that Jones has so tainted himself as to make his existence a burden to Smith. And Smith is not without power; he is not necessarily weaker or less cunning than Jones. Jones may well up and find himself dead from Smith's self-defense. It's another sign of irrationality to make unnecessary enemies. One ought not to be cruel for this reason, too.

Finally, if one is suspicious of intuitions and unimpressed with my natural law approach, he may want to work out a moral code on the utilitarian basis, specifically what in my book on Rawls I call "lawgiver utilitarianism." One will then try to create an "efficient" system of positive laws and moral precepts that on the whole, through its complex harmony, and if actually in large measure adhered to by the populace, best promotes social cooperation and economic progress. Since we're dealing here with ethics not politics, we must still postulate a fundamental intuition that an individual *ought to* seek greatest general happiness. Sidgwick, for example, finds this intuition self-evident, though I do not. Regardless, we perceive the means to the greatest good for the greatest number with the faculty or virtue of prudence enlightened with knowledge of economics and every other relevant science. These three capacities – wisdom, synderesis, and prudence – interact with, check, and enrich each other, allowing the formation of a sophisticated ethic.

The amoralist Richard Garner accepts Mackie's error theory and concerns himself with the problem of whether moral talk should be retained in its light, perhaps because it is somehow "useful."[27] Obviously I don't grant the premise, but he mentions a few alleged disadvantages of moral realism. "What good is morality if it can so readily be marshaled to defend the sanctions of a tyrant?" he asks, for example. It is true that governments, in their relentless lust for power, always try to put libertarian gloss on their unjust acts of coercion, but that's precisely because they realize that their actions would be indefensibly villainous if clearly seen for what they are. It does not follow that morality itself is an illusion. If the state's shenanigans, such as a war or inflation or restraints on trade, are seen in their true moral light, they will stand condemned.

It may be that terrorist "fanatics" can do a great deal of damage "in the name of morality." This claim obviously resembles the atheistic argument that religion is a bane because a certain amount of mischief has been perpetrated in its name. "Morality is invariably called upon to underwrite the actions of both sides of any violent conflict – large, medium, or small – and this does seem to be a reason for thinking that

we might be better off without it." But anything whatsoever can be turned into a weapon and abused, why single out moral reasoning (or religion)? If the terrorists are defending their actions in the court of public opinion with spurious moral propaganda, then it falls to the philosophers to refute their arguments. Again amoralism is a non sequitur. It is only if one believes in some absolutist-subjectivist metaethics, where my disliking sushi entails that no one shall eat sushi, and where your liking sushi entails that everyone must devour sushi, that we enter a possibly irreconcilable conflict. But surely it is a ridiculous straw man to conceive of morality this way.

Further, "morality inflames disputes because moralizing an issue tends to excite and confuse the parties involved. If we hope to resolve conflicts by arriving at a compromise, our task will be easier if moral disagreements are seen as partial conflicts of interest 'without the embroidery of rights and moral justification.'" Suppose that I want to kill Garner, but Garner does not want to be killed. This situation, according to our author, has no moral import; it is only a "conflict of interests" that should be resolved with a "compromise." Perhaps a suitable compromise would be for Garner to give me all his money; this way we both get at least some of what we want. Would Garner also plead that a half-truth is a compromise between a truth and a lie?

Jonas Olson weighs in with a "debunking" program: apparently our considering certain moral statements to be true is some sort of evolutionary adaptation; such beliefs, though "useful" for "solving coordination problems" or what have you, need not be "true."[28] In general, the debunkers tend to debunk too much: presumably, Olson's own philosophizing is not a search for truth but a means to reproducing more efficiently (see Section 1.2.1). Why should he believe his own arguments? Cars are useful devices for getting around; that does not mean that automotive engineers are systematically deceived when they talk about their work. Economic theory is useful for unleashing economic progress; surely it corresponds to reality, too. Usually, the usefulness of a belief system is due precisely to its being true. Reality punishes having delusions, why not also in moral thinking? It seems that false moral beliefs would be as maladaptive as false beliefs about any other subject.

If it is insisted that human reason is fundamentally unfit to find the truth because it "evolved" to serve reproductive fitness rather than the pursuit of truth, then the door is open to general skepticism. There is nothing special about morality here; since reason is unreliable, *all* our beliefs lack warrant. But surely, the success of our sciences, both a posteriori and a priori, and of our civilization suggests that this argument is false. One would have to show why morality in particular is vulnerable to evolutionary debunking.

Joyce invokes the theory of evolution to "explain" why we fall prey to the illusion of objective morality. Suppose that there were two communities which arose through some random mutations, one that found incest repugnant and one that did not. The incest-hating community produced healthy children and increased in numbers and thrived while the incest-permitting community produced sickly children who left fewer and fewer descendants and eventually was wiped out. Thus, the "meme" that incest was bad came to possess the minds of humans in general. Similarly, the community that considered incest not only bad but morally prohibited or taboo was better positioned to thwart occasional temptations to incest among its members than the community that frowned on incest but did not morally condemn it. The first community, too, at long last outbred the second. This then is some version of evolutionary explanation of the origin of the idea that incest is morally wrong. But I fail to see how this story proves that incest is not "really" or objectively morally wrong. For example, perhaps it's wrong precisely because it corrupts the human race, and natural law as a science of (true) happiness bids us to avoid this sort of thing. (St. Thomas argued against incest on the grounds that it confused different kinds of affection: the love between spouses is incompatible with mother love, for example; it is contrary to the "natural respect" that children ought to show to parents and by extension to other relatives; it would make family life an endless orgy; and it would impoverish social life by "hindering a man from having many friends: since through a man taking a stranger to wife, all his wife's relations are united to him by a special kind of friendship."[29]) People with weak or unreliable eyes which had trouble detecting tigers in front of them were all eaten and left no descendants; so only clear-sighted people remained; hence good eyesight was advantageous in the struggle for survival and was selected for. This may explain why, when I see a tiger and form the belief "There is a tiger in front of me," this belief is most likely true. Similarly, why can't we take the anti-incest-selection story just sketched to suggest that, when I think of parent-child incest, I believe that it is morally wrong truly? Joyce does not of course believe that it is morally wrong, but for a trivial reason that on the error theory he favors, *nothing* is morally wrong.

The belief that incest is wrong (and therefore the concept of wrongness as such) is "useful" or helps those who have it to leave more children and sabotages the reproduction of those who do not have it. Joyce argues that this belief would be useful even if false; whereas only a *true* belief that there is a tiger in front of me is useful. Very well, let's say then that faculties (such as good vision or philosophical acuity) that produce true beliefs will be "genetically" selected for and that certain moral judgments will be "memetically" or culturally selected for, with

both getting transmitted to offspring. Why then wouldn't the *combination* of these, faculties that produce true moral judgments (such as indeed our "wisdom"), be likewise favored by natural selection? And in that case our moral judgments are trustworthy and should often be true. In our example, the different attitudes toward incest are results of random mutations. But now that we *know why* incest is wrong and can prove it by ratiocination, we seem to be justified in our moral stance toward it.[e]

Sharon Street objects to this argument on the following grounds:

> Take… truths about the presence or absence of electromagnetic wavelengths of the lowest frequencies. For most organisms, such truths are irrelevant to the undertakings of survival and reproduction; hence having an ability to grasp them would confer no benefit. And then one must also take into account the significant costs associated with developing and maintaining such a sophisticated ability. Since for most organisms, this would be energy and resources spent for no gain in terms of reproductive success, the possession of such an ability would actually be positively *disadvantageous*.[30]

And yet here we humans are, in possession of faculties that (have enabled us to build tools that) reliably yield such truths. Street goes on to claim that knowing truths about morality is equally an evolutionary burden. The appropriate conclusion that escapes her would seem to be that Darwinism is false at least regarding human intellectual and spiritual powers. In any case, survival and reproduction are simply two very common and even almost universal human ends (they'd better be, since neither the dead nor the unborn have any use for ethics); that commonsense morality is in part beholden to these ends is unsurprising. The moral rule "murder is wrong" has certainly helped man to fill the earth and subdue it, and what does this fact indicate other than that this rule is *true*? Further, these two ends are a mere foundation of what we call happiness. A modern industrial civilization tempts people with pleasures that "evolution" could hardly have "anticipated." In order to develop present-day capitalism, we had to discover its advantages, such as by economic reasoning. The rule "you ought not to steal," for example, is unlikely to have "evolved." It is true that humans by their nature seek to survive and have children. But no one has ever argued that morality has no connection to human purposes – these and many others besides. As such, it is really beside the point in metaethics "where we came from." What matters is what sort of creatures we are now. The natural law morality used in this book takes our species as it presently is.

Katia Vavova renders the argument this way: "Morality, the

debunker claims, could be about anything. It is conceptually possible that morality is about throwing ourselves off cliffs and causing ourselves pain. If it had been, evolution would have still inclined us to think it was about survival and pain avoidance. So we cannot trust our judgment that it is."[31] Well, no, morality cannot be about anything. It is inextricably linked with human nature and relations and with the human reason figuring out those things; morality for humans is different from the morality of ants (if there is such a thing) and would be different from the morality of vampires. Evolution has influenced our nature. So what? It is possible that as a result our normative ethics is to an extent preoccupied with survival and reproduction. For example, perhaps people who refuse to have children are regarded as selfish and morally lax. Well, perhaps that's just what they are. There may be an evolutionary advantage to men and women pairing up voluntarily, since a genetically defective male who could force sex on an unwilling woman would harm the species. This may "explain" why we condemn rape. It may also be precisely one of the reasons why rape is wrong. Maybe God has also influenced our nature, and our morality reflects that by demanding that we love each other as ourselves and thereby save our souls. As with sausages, it may be best not to see how natural law was made.

Morality is a philosophy of justifying interhuman relations. Would throwing ourselves off cliffs and causing ourselves pain do such justifying? Perhaps natural selection weeded out the people who thought so. No one now has such pre-theoretical moral beliefs. But, assuming that our reason is serviceable, we can also use it to *prove* that such views are false. There is overdetermination here, but why should we let such a happy fact bother us? Both our animal nature and our rational nature counsel against throwing ourselves off cliffs, etc. Maybe we in fact need both influences in order to function as a species. A measure of redundancy can be a sound design principle.

Social cooperation under division of labor and entrepreneurial freedom has created so much wealth as to license impressive population growth without jeopardizing general prosperity (since it is per capita investment that measures the overall standard of living). Human reason, in figuring out the laws of cooperation, has enabled man over centuries indeed to become wildly successful at survival and reproduction; it has been his preeminent tool in the struggle for existence. The bourgeois morality then is by no means an evolutionary dead end. It is therefore not arbitrary, as if unconnected with human flourishing. Those tribes or nations that adopted it outreproduced those that did not; the former may even have simply exterminated the latter in wars – for example, it is indisputable that capitalism produces the best weapons and equips the most efficient and deadly armies. (Though blaming the free market for

wars, colonialism, and imperial interventions is like blaming a man's good health for his violent crimes.) Possession of moral truths strengthens social bonds and grants man ever greater power over nature and thus indirectly enhances his reproductive fitness. (Or rather precepts that strengthen social bonds, etc. are morally true.) I'm sure there is more to morality than whatever helped our hunter-gatherer ancestors to bring forth offspring more effectively. But first, morality *is* in part concerned with such things, and what worked for those guys may well suit us, too. There are provisions of ancient moral codes that are simply true. And second, as civilization blossomed, so did the moral knowledge on which it was founded. Humans reasoned their way to moral truth both in those bygone days and at the present time.

It is true that there is a gap between what is conducive to one's survival and reproduction and what is conducive to his happiness, both narrow and true. In fact, the existence of such a gap was key to my critique of evolutionary imperialism in Section 1.2.1. Darwinian, and any other, reductions of man are hopeless. On the one hand, it would be extremely odd if ethics, as reason puzzled it out, recommended those relations between humans that would put mankind in danger of extinction. There is nothing wrong with having a keen interest in survival and reproduction. On the other hand, morality does not always approve of everything that magnifies one's reproductive fitness. It may hold Don Quixote in more esteem than Sancho Panza. So, there *is* a partial distortion. But no one has ever denied that irrational passions can cloud understanding. This fact is no reason either to become a moral skeptic or to reject realism.

Presumably, both moral philosophy and quantum mechanics are nontrivial disciplines. Both are advanced by specialists. It is true that ethics, unlike quantum mechanics, is to be studied by every man, and one continues his learning from cradle to grave. Everyone, moreover, is called to be a saint which presupposes moral expertise. Still, everyone has moral intuitions, while no one has quantum mechanical intuitions. Why then are the moral ideas of the masses reliable? Well, even if we have something in common with apes, we have up our sleeves two things that apes lack: cultural evolution and reason. As for cultural evolution (by a sort of Hayekian human action not human design), moral communities that practiced justice outcompeted decadent communities that were torn up by strife and either absorbed them or wiped them out. It is, after all, the essence of justice that it grants a community harmony and progress, allowing it to dominate and pacify the barbarians around it. The moral ideas of successful societies then spread throughout the entire world. As for moral reasoning, instead of starting with our moral intuitions, we can ruminate on the essence and condition of man. Even if the intuitions of our savage ancestors were

suspect, we could emend them by strenuous mental effort. The test of morality is whether it *works* at, from the bare minimum of securing human survival and reproduction, to building a global civilization, to knitting together the communion of saints.

If moral facts were other than what they are, the debunker maintains, we'd still believe what evolution had disposed us to believe. I reject this claim. If moral facts were other than what they are, "we" would no longer be human, and I don't know or care to wonder what *those* creatures would and would not believe. In other words, keeping human nature fixed, the moral facts are necessarily true; it's *impossible* for them to be other than what they are.

Perhaps the argument can be put as follows. We *believe* that cruelty is wrong, for example, because those of our ancient forefathers who felt that cruelty was fine for whatever reasons did not leave any surviving descendants. If they had, and in fact outbred their meeker fellows, then humans today would celebrate cruelty. The answer to the question, "Why do we think cruelty is wrong?" is then "Our genes told us so." But cruelty is not *in fact* wrong; there is no moral fact corresponding to that idea. In the first place, if human nature sanctioned cruelty by making cruel people successful, either biologically in terms of descendants or economically in terms of prosperity or both, then perhaps cruelty would be a good thing indeed. If cruelty were individually profitable but socially destructive, and chaos and misery reigned as a result, then the world would have been unwisely designed, and without *some* measure of reconciliation between the interests of an individual and society there would be little use for ethics. Darwin himself argued that "If, for instance, to take an extreme case, men were reared under precisely the same conditions as hive-bees, there can hardly be a doubt that our unmarried females would, like the worker-bees, think it a sacred duty to kill their brothers, and mothers would strive to kill their fertile daughters; and no one would think of interfering. Nevertheless, the bee, or any other social animal, would gain in our supposed case, as it appears to me, some feeling of right or wrong, or a conscience."[32] This is of course speculation, since men who were like bees wouldn't be men anymore; nor would rational bees remain bees. The point, however, is well-taken, since if cruelty were not wrong as in these examples or if humans were like the black widow spiders the female of which devoured the male upon mating, we probably wouldn't believe that it was wrong. Hence our wisdom is reliable: it tracks the moral requirements of our nature, just as the wisdom of bee-men would track the moral requirements of theirs. Second, the pertinent question is "Why is cruelty wrong *in the actual world* or *given our actual nature*?" If we reply according to the method above with something like "Because it torpedoes one's own true

happiness," the proof may be conclusive.

Again, if we lived in a world that was like a massively multiplayer online video game which featured player-vs-player combat in which killing another human brought glory and riches to you, while the slain humans resurrected nearby a few seconds later ready to charge into battle again, then perhaps "murder" would be not only not wrong but downright praiseworthy. Even in that case, our reason would evaluate the nature of this world and of the creatures in it and come up with the morality suitable for them.

The meek, Jesus declared, shall inherit the earth. I think He meant it literally. He did not mean that the meek shall find spiritual salvation or inherit *heaven*. These were addressed in the other beatitudes. Why would the actual earth on which we live eventually be populated by the meek? The argument consists in two points. First, there is in general such a thing as progress. There is indeed a myriad of dead ends into which individuals and nations joyously directed themselves over the course of human history. But they lead nowhere. The sinners have to, on their own will and intellect and power, renounce sin, lest they never find happiness. Here's a typical headline in our still cruel world: "Islamic State Has Full Control of Syria's Palmyra." Here's the thing, though: *there is nothing there but ancient ruins*. ISIS was the undisputed ruler of a desert wasteland. And that is all that place will remain, until whoever runs it meeks up. Second, the direction of social progress and justice points toward laissez-faire capitalism. But there is a eugenic tendency within the free market that causes those people who are more productive and better at satisfying consumer desires, i.e., at making other people happier, to be able to "afford" more children than their less capable fellows. This will make a difference *on the margin*, and consequently *on average* the top 50% of earners will have more children (say, 3.2) than the bottom 50% of earners (say, 2.5). Society should be expected to change toward "smarter" or at least "sheepier" population. "Sheep" in the Christian sense at least is a term of praise not insult. A sheep (as opposed to "goat" in Mt 25) is a holy person, though one can overdo it: one should be a spiritual not intellectual sheep. As a result, superior workers and entrepreneurs should as time goes on be leaving more children who will, on average, inherit their benign powers. Such competent and industrious men and women will be especially gentle and more intelligent, including emotionally, in their inborn traits (as being a successful entrepreneur entails reading one's customers) and will proliferate faster than the more aggressive and to that extent less useful to society persons. (This, however, only *given the laissez-faire ideology*. If we want to fulfill the Lord's prophecy, then we'd better adopt unfettered capitalism ASAP.) If a process like this is in fact in operation, does it mean that the meek's affirmation of the morality of meekness is an

illusion? But why if it leads precisely to astonishing and accelerating civilizational advance?

In speculating how morality has arisen, Yeager proposes that "parents lacking the biological capacities and dispositions necessary for care of the young would tend not to pass their genes on to later generations."[33] In the first place, humans time and again *fail* to care for their children well or even at all; that in fact is an aspect of their ubiquitous moral degeneracy. "Evolution" has hardly done a flawless job inculcating the parental spirit into people. Now it is not altogether preposterous to claim that my genes play some role in making me feel (1) a *desire* to care for my children, though Darwinians of course do not identify the alleged mechanism according to which genes induce such feelings; the facts are simply invented to fit their theories. It may even be that genes trick me into registering (2) a *personal duty* to care for my children and remorse if I refuse, if communities bound by such a sense of duty flourished more abundantly than those that did not. The move from "I feel that I ought to care for my children" to (3) "It's an *objective duty* for all parents to care for their children" is natural enough; for example it may be asserted by a moralist who wishes all parents to avoid a guilty conscience. But owing to the ignoble origins of (2), from the muck and slime of our bodies, (3) is a mere rationalization rather than an intellectual perception of some holy and awe-inspiring moral reality. (3) is "a collective illusion foisted upon us by our genes," or something like that. However, what *doesn't* follow from this sketch is that (3) is *unjustified*. In fact, *proving* (3) is easy enough. *Someone* must attend to children lest they die and the human race with them; if not the parents, then it would have to be the state. But Mises argues, for example: "To take away a woman's children and put them in an institution is to take away part of her life; and children are deprived of the most far-reaching influences when they are torn from the bosom of the family. … From the parents the child learns to love, and so comes to possess the forces which enable it to grow up into a healthy human being. The segregated educational institution breeds homosexuality and neurosis."[34] The traditional family is apparently an essential means to a good society, etc. (3) is rather uncontroversially true; the "genes" supply us with a near-universal belief in it; and the proofs provide justification; hence the resulting justified true belief comprises knowledge of this moral fact.

Even if having true moral beliefs had no evolutionary advantage, the capacity correctly to reason morally may be a side effect of human rationality in general which *is* useful. Michael Huemer comments that seeing distant stars is useless to most creatures in their struggle for survival. But it comes naturally along with vision as such which does confer an advantage.[35] Similarly, perhaps moral sense, though irrelevant

to our survival and reproduction (an implausible proposition as I have suggested), is as much a by-product of rationality as our ability to do astrophysics. We are able to grasp the moral law *without* just like we are able to comprehend the starry heavens above.

Joyce himself concedes that not only adherence to commonsense morality but even "fictive" belief in the objective strong categorical imperatives "will be in the long-term best interests of ordinarily situated persons with normal human desires."[36] But in reaching this conclusion Joyce invokes and proves precisely various deliverances of natural law. It is the fact that human beings are constituted and work in certain definite ways that makes it true, for example, according to Joyce, that "the instrumental value of moral beliefs lies in their combating of weakness of will, their blocking of the temporary revaluing of outcomes that is characteristic of short-sighted rationalizations, their silencing of certain kinds of calculations."[37] As natural law generates objective moral duties, at least one such objective duty – namely, to adopt morality even as a fiction – does exist. It is a requirement of reason that a man think like a moral success theorist at least outside the philosophy classroom even, and especially, if he feels nihilistic. As Etienne Gilson quipped, "the natural law always buries its undertakers." Joyce's entire case hinges on denying objectivism by affirming (modified) HUM and internalism. It collapses if there is such a thing as duty-driven motivation which permits us to retain the objectivity of ethics.[f]

The error-theoretic claim that all suitable moral propositions are false does not hold water. Let it be, for example, that "murder is wrong" is false, since such wrongness depends on objective prescriptivity which, Mackie's disciples insist, is illusory. But on my account of the objectivity of ethics, the moral prohibition of murder prescribes a duty first to abstain from murder and second to rid oneself of murderous desires. If there is no such duty, then nothing has the authority to command me to obey. I am free from the influence of any duties. Therefore, murder is straightforwardly permissible. "Murder is Ok" is then true. It is vain to protest that "Murder is *morally* Ok," too, is false, since morality fails to refer; murder is permissible on the error theory in the exact same simple sense in which eating a sandwich is permissible. It does not follow that society must necessarily crumble if the error ideology is generally embraced, e.g., the state might be able to contain injustices externally by threatening punishment. But it does follow that if the error theory is true, then *everything* is permitted. Error *theory* collapses inevitably into the *practice* of moral nihilism.

It may be argued that on error theory, "murder is wrong," though false, might be used by us to justify punishment. For punishment is purposive infliction of suffering. We might flinch at it. If, however, we felt that punishments for crimes are just or deserved by the perpetrators,

that it is a positive good to torment another, then we might conduct this exercise with greater readiness. Unfortunately, on error theory, "punishment is just," too, is false. I do not understand why we would need one lie to help convince us of another. We could easily get by with "punishment is useful for preserving social cooperation" (which happens to be quite true) or something like that.

"Murder is wrong" is dubious, according to Mackie, because it presupposes a commitment to moral objectivity which fails to hold, sort of like "The present king of France is bald" is neither true nor false because it falsely presupposes that France is a monarchy. But Mackie himself seems to associate morality with social cooperation or human flourishing. Very well, let's get creative by *defining* "right" (or "good" or whatever) as "socially virtuous" or "tending to further social cooperation / human flourishing," and "wrong" as "antisocial" or "tending to retard it." One possibility is that these definitions make all positive atomic moral propositions, including "murder is wrong," have seemly truth values, in which case the "error theory" is nothing of the sort. Mackie would then have accomplished a reduction of the content of moral judgments, but this reduction must be justified in a separate argument. The other is that if "murder is wrong" and its fellow propositions are still all false, then "murder injures social cooperation" would be as false as "murder furthers social cooperation"; consequently, no pragmatic public policy would ensue from such nonsense. Mackie would then need a different explanation of what the point of moral discourse is. In short, the error theory is uncomprehending and vain.

Footnotes

a. An atomic moral proposition is one that postulates a duty. The non-atomic "If murder is wrong, then so is theft," for example, would be true if "murder is wrong" were false.

b. Peter Kreeft relates: "Kant was attending a lecture by a materialistic astronomer on the topic of man's place in the universe. The astronomer concluded his lecture with: 'So you see that astronomically speaking, man is utterly insignificant.' Kant replied: 'Professor, you forgot the most important thing, man is the astronomer.'" ("The Pillars of Unbelief")

c. Some say the last end of man is not happiness but to "glorify God." But God is sufficiently glorified precisely when His creatures find joy in the life that He gave them: this is proof to Him that He created competently. And for human beings specifically, you glorify God within and by means of your own self by becoming or at least striving to become truly happy (which may and in my view does involve loving God). Indeed, the better *you* are *metaphysically*, *morally*, and *physically*, the better *God*

is *divinely*.

d. Huemer (2005) casts intuitions as initial moral appearances perceived by reason. They can be had of simple moral ideas or complex ones equally, and they supply justification. They are what seems at first glance to be the case, though what seems true may be false for a wide variety of reasons (such as misunderstanding, bias, confusion, etc.). But they are the materials to commence one's reasoning with. Synderesis differs from this view by being restricted to axiomatic moral principles which would seem to render it more reliable.

e. Joyce conceives of morality as "a kind of internalized sovereign" that assists the Hobbesian external sovereign in moving people from inferior to superior equilibria in Prisoner's Dilemma-type games. This is a strange view. The reason why the external sovereign works is precisely that he reigns over *all* players. A sovereign that reigns over just you and no one else all but ensures that you lose in Prisoner's Dilemma reliably every time whenever the other guy ignores morality. Such a handicap is a social and evolutionary dead end.

f. Both Hume and Joyce reject objectivism, but Hume takes refuge in a subjectivist metaethics, while Joyce considers objective categorical imperatives to be a nonnegotiable commitment in all moral discourse, such that if they are denied, then all ethics is done for. Now as Peter Kreeft writes, "Real, objective morality – absolute morality – can be denied by your modern theory, but only after it is first affirmed by your natural moral experience, by everybody's moral experience." (*Refutation*, 61) And Joyce does affirm it as such, suggesting, for example, that "morality may be imbued with a deeply mysterious kind of force – a kind of primitive feeling of 'being bound by rules and ends' that resists explication" ("Error," 524-5). It *is* a force, of law, and it does bind, but it's neither primitive nor inexplicable.

Endnotes

1. Westermarck, *Relativity*, Ch. 5.

2. *HA*, 175.

3. *HA*, 286.

4. *HA*, 884.

5. *HA*, 95.

6. Mackie, *Ethics*, Ch. 1, 8.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., Ch. 4, 3.

9. Ibid., Ch 10, 3.

10. Ibid., Ch. 10, 2.

11. Burgess, “Against Ethics” in Joyce, *World*.

12. Mackie, *Ethics*, Ch. 1, 11.

13. *EL*, 4.

14. Kellenberger, *Relativism*, 38ff.

15. *ST*, Supplement, 65, 1.

16. *HA*, 878-9.

17. Horowitz, “Intuitions.”

18. Mackie, *Ethics*, Ch. 1, 9.

19. Moore, *Principia*, §50.

20. Mackie, *Ethics*, Ch. 1, 9.

21. Hume, *Enquiry*, Section 9, Appendix 1.

22. Mackie, *Ethics*, Ch. 1, 9.

23. *ST*, II-II, 45, 1.

24. *CE*, “Synderesis.”

25. Hare, *Language*, 40.

26. Mackie, *Ethics*, Ch. 1, 9.

27. Garner, “Abolishing Morality” in Joyce, *World*.

28. Olson, *Error*, Ch. 7.2.

29. *ST*, II-II, 154, 9.

30. Street, “Dilemma,” 130.

31. Vavova, “Debunking,” 112.

32. Darwin, *Descent*, 99-100.

33. Yeager, *Ethics*, 64.

34. Mises, *Socialism*, 105.

35. Huemer, *Intuitionism*, 216.

36. Joyce, *Myth*, 222.

37. Ibid., 217.

8. Philosophizing with Feelings

Emotivism is a degenerate version of subjectivism, stripped of subjectivism's cognitivism. Uttering "murder is wrong" for the emotivist is not proposing something for one's consideration but an *act* of expressing disapproval of murder, in particular an act of vomiting one's emotions onto perhaps an unsuspecting hapless stranger who ends up drenched in the emotivist's filth. The advantages of emotivism are said to be (1) dissolving the metaphysical and epistemological problems in metaethics and (2) explaining internalism.

Noncognitivists make much of the fact that "murder is wrong" is an *expression* of disapproval of murder, not a *report* of such disapproval. This distinction is, however, without much difference, as it comes into force only when the expression is insincere, or where it is performed merely to entertain, or something like that. In such cases the person will lack the attitude being expressed. But then it is no different from the fact that my asserting "the cat is on the mat" need not indicate that I believe it; I could be lying or assuming it for the sake of argument or whatever. A sincere expression entails that the noncognitivist does disapprove. Then the proposition "I disapprove of murder," when asserted by him, is true. The cognitivist subjectivist will then take this fact to be grounds for asserting the truth of "murder is wrong." The noncognitivist will not take this extra step, but it's the only difference between the two subjectivists. This seems extremely unwise for the noncognitivist since it lays him open to the full gamut of the Frege-Geach problems. We'll discuss them shortly.

In other words, X = "the cat is on the mat" and Y = "I believe that X" are both propositions, but they mean different things. X says something about the cat; Y says something about me. X and Y can be entertained separately; neither proposition entails the other. Similarly, "Boo! murder" and "I disapprove of murder" are also not the same things: the former is an act; the latter is a proposition that states that a certain feeling is being had. The act can be performed in the absence of the feeling, and in its turn the feeling may be unexpressed. But there is also a disanalogy. X is not an *expression* of Y. X is a full-fledged idea that has no essential connection with Y. But is the act mere "behavior" or bodily motions? Surely, it is more meaningful than the falling of a snowflake or the revving of an airplane engine. (What would *philosophers* do with those?) Hence the inner procession of the intellect and will must be conjoined to it. The action must be understood to yield any fruit. The "behavior" is a sign of something human behind it. The

natural interpretation of a man's booing murder is that he disapproves of it.

Since "murder is wrong" is a speech act not a proposition, we are relieved from asking what it corresponds to and how we come to know it. It's also true that both forms of subjectivism will make sense of internalism, but as we have seen in Chapter 4, cognitivist subjectivism does so at a very high price, and noncognitivist subjectivism inherits its defects.

Uttering "murder is wrong" is indeed an act; but the (apparent) *proposition being uttered* cannot itself be an act. On expressivism, it means feeling or experiencing an emotion, in this case of disapproval of murder.

On the other hand, if we take the expressivist definition of emotivism literally, then because emotivist ethics consists in mere animal meowing "Boo! murder" and barking "Hooray! courage," it is unsurprisingly sterile. The emotivist has really done everything to paint himself in a corner he cannot get out of. Thinking of moral statements as attitudes may possibly be compatible with objectivism: we might argue that booing murder is a virtuous attitude which is objectively morally superior to hooraying murder which is a vicious attitude. Murder *ought to* be disapproved of. An emotivist must by the logic of his theory disavow such ideas since they lead straightforwardly to the truth-aptness of moral propositions. (Because then by saying "murder is wrong" I would be expressing the idea that I and everyone *should* disapprove, not my *actual* disapproval.) Blackburn, for example, does not disavow it: he talks about a "best possible set of attitudes," "improvement and deterioration" of attitudes, more or less "admirable" sensibilities (from whose point of view and by what criteria?), and rejects the idea that he has no right to "judge unfavorably people with any other opinion."[1] But emotivism deals not with attitudes but with speech-acts of expressing them. To boo murder is as much an act as to hammer in a nail or to drive a car. It's just *a bodily motion*. How can one such motion be compared with another at all? (One person may be a better car driver than another of course, but presumably we are all competent at flapping our tongues.)

Perhaps Blackburn can be interpreted as defending some sort of absolutist emotivism, according to which by saying "Boo! *X*" (and thereby expressing a negative personal attitude toward *X*) one issues a sort of royal edict for everyone to avoid *X*. Certainly, "Get bent!" would be an appropriate response on the part of the emotivist philosopher's loyal subjects. In a stark contradiction, Blackburn is also a projectivist about ethics in the following sense. Recall Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities. The shape of an object is a primary quality: I see that the clock is round, and it really is round. But color is a

secondary property: I see that the clock is red, but it's not really red; at best it has a disposition (manifested perhaps in the physical structure of its surface) to appear red to normal observers under normal conditions. According to this explanation, we project our subjective experience of redness onto the object by falsely calling *it* "red" when in fact *it* is not. Thus, too, wrongness is at the most a secondary quality: torturing the cat is not really wrong; it's just our feelings getting projected out into the world. The ethical case is even worse, because emotivists do not say that the state of affairs of the cat being tortured has an objective disposition to cause feelings of discomfiture or horror in normal (e.g., sane) observers. These feelings are entirely arbitrary: some people feel horror; others, curiosity; still others, nothing at all, and there need be, on emotivism, nothing abnormal about any of them. Emotivism does not opine that we *ought to* be discomfited or horrified. Again we see that there is no distinction on noncognitivist subjectivism between "moral" approval / disapproval and physical like / dislike.[a] This view destroys ethics as a field efficiently. On the other hand, on the metaethical theory presented in this book, emotions may be felt, but they are secondary to ideas and do not determine morality. They acquire their "moral" quality by being derived from the contemplation of *objective* metaphysical goods and evils, duties, rights and wrongs.

Blackburn's projectivism reduces differences in moral views to *nurture*, i.e., to the fact that people are "brought up" in different ways. Smith may think that *X* is his duty, but he might not have thought that had he been brought up differently. There may still be such things as duties, but *X* is a duty only because Smith feels this way; he's not objectively bound. "Our sources of self-respect are malleable"; we can witness the "plasticity of our sensibilities."[2] So that settles it. There is no limit to what humans can become through sheer force of upbringing or external conditioning. The *nature* of man plays no role. (I mean nature as *Homo sapiens*, not as someone's particular genetic endowment.) But this is ludicrous. Upbringing at its best conforms a child to the true moral law (at least within a given ideology); more frequently, it corrupts him in many various ways. Nurture can at the most fulfill what nature promises. All righteous men are alike (in moral goodness); each sinner is perverse in his own uniquely disgusting fashion. There is indeed much malleable plasticity in how we can ruin our own lives or the lives our fellow men. These false paths are no evidence for subjectivism. To imitate *Pulp Fiction*, here's some cold-blooded stuff to say to a philosopher before you pop a cap in his argument: "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road broad that leads to destruction, and those who enter through it are many. How narrow the gate and constricted the road that leads to life. And those who find it are few."[3, b]

Blackburn considers ethics to be a "practical" discipline. This is an irritating turn of phrase, though I will grant that ethics is not contemplation or pursuit of truth for its own sake. Practical arts and applied sciences help you achieve your goals and get ahead in life. The preeminent practical science is economics which explains how we ought to cooperate socially to become as *narrowly* happy as time allows. Ethics, on the other hand, is an arrow shot by God into your very heart that convicts you of your own sin. As both law and amazing grace, when known, it inaugurates a process of straightening oneself out, of becoming human rather than a wolf, desperado, or pervert. Ethics aids in spiritual self-purification; it's practical only in the sense that in the long run it contributes to one's *true* happiness, not in the sense of answering "How do I accomplish *X*?" Far from affirming your ends and arming you with the means to attain them, ethics takes away the means by taking away the ends which it judges unsavory that ought not to be sought after at all. Blackburn himself offers a nice discussion of sin, guilt, and shame. E.g., "the sinner is foul or vile… Sinning is supposed to bring with it the particular pain of self-disgust: the sinner is not only bad, but unclean. The sinner ought not just to feel guilty, but ought to loathe himself, ought to hide himself from the sight of others and the sight of God."[4] This echoes a saying attributed to Plato, apparently wrongly: "We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light." It means that unlike children who are innocent, many adults are ashamed of their deeds and, if offered to make their lives known to everybody, would shrink and hide in the darkness instead. Shame is opposed to glory which is marked on the contrary by *clarity*, in St. Augustine words, "brilliant celebrity with praise." Morality is one indispensable way out the pit, and even if thus climbing up is a "practical" matter, it is surely in a different sense than following instructions on how to boil an egg.

The emotivist's judgments consisting of attitude expressions have no epistemological import: not only are they neither true nor false; they seem entirely meaningless and even costly to the judging individual: why should he go to the trouble of "expressing" his feelings to another? And why should his interlocutor bother to listen to such melodrama? Now emotivism has a problem of identifying the specific "moral" feelings that are being expressed, as distinct from other judgments of value. Ayer writes:

> In adding that this action is wrong, I am not making any further statement about it. I am simply evincing my *moral* disapproval about it. It is as if I had said, "You stole that money," in a *peculiar* tone of horror, or written with the addition of some *special* exclamation marks.
>
> The tone, or the exclamation marks, adds nothing to the

> literal meaning of the sentence. It merely serves to show that the expression of it is attended by certain feelings in the speaker.[5]

But he fails to describe the relevant properties of the "moral" feelings. One attempt to do so is made by Stevenson whose theory of meaning is "causal": the meaning of a word or sentence for him is the thoughts or feelings that the sign has a disposition to (a) express in the speaker and (b) evoke or incite in the hearer. Moral terms in particular have an emotive meaning, are used to exhort, and have a "quasi-imperative" aspect. They express our approval or disapproval and demand that others feel likewise. "(a*) I approve; (b*) do so as well" was Stevenson's rough understanding of "good."

This picks up on something real. On the theory herein defended, "murder is wrong" is truth-apt, and if true, then true for all people. If I am convinced that murder is wrong, I might indeed be interested in another person's moral improvement as well, perhaps out of charity, and so desire that he, too, realize that murder is wrong. But for emotivists, "murder is wrong" is not truth-apt and has no truth value. *How* then am I to persuade you to accept this moral idea? Suppose we both agree on the facts of a particular murder: the butler did kill his master with a blunt weapon for money. I then, *bleah*, vomit my emotions onto you. What reason do you have to imitate me from now on? I can't think of any. You may have your own emotions to vomit quite pleasurably. If you are content, what can I possibly do to change your ways? "I approve; do so as well" is hubris if the *only* proffered reason for another person to approve as well is that *I* approve. Furthermore, if my approval is a subjective preference on the level of liking sushi, then I fail to see why I am supposed to be driven to impel you to share it. On the other hand, if there are decisive objective *reasons* to approve, then we both *ought to* approve by submitting to them. Indeed, only if the reasons why I approve of *X* have the undeniable power to convince everyone to do so as well will "*X* is good / right / a duty / etc." be a distinctly metaphysical-moral proposition (or on emotivism sentiment). Or are we really to believe that when a philosopher is doing any work in normative ethics, he is saying: "Alright people, I'm about to puke my emotions on you. Prepare yourselves; hold on to your handrails and brace for impact, because this baby is coming out full blast. Booooo!!! murder!!!"

Perhaps a con attitude toward murder might be not an essential but merely a common property in a certain community. "2 + 2 = 4" is true in all possible worlds; that all men are less than 10 feet tall may be false in some worlds but is still true in the actual world for all men who have ever lived or will live in the future – so it is a "proper accident"; and "murder is wrong" is *in fact* accepted by all people in a given society. Now "Boo! murder" serves both to express an attitude and to

admonish, or less euphemistically, command the listener, as R.M. Hare thought. Suppose that I am a child who wants to become a wise man. Suppose further (contrary to fact) that "Boo! murder" were a report of the speaker's or appraiser's actual sentiment. Everyone I meet boos murder. However, obviously, other people have no general authority over me; they are not my "commanders" or perhaps commanders-in-chief (around whom we are all supposed to "get behind" as soon as a new war is declared to be "on"). They can't boss me around. If it is replied that I, too, should attend to the evidence of the wickedness of murder, then what becomes of the aim of expressing attitudes? Who cares in that case what Smith and Jones *personally* grandiosely and megalomaniacally demand of other people? So, the exhortative function of expressing an attitude seems entirely otiose, even silly. Natural law can generate commands and duties since we must act according to our nature or perish. But no individual, as if imagining himself comrade Stalin issuing ukases, can tell people how to conduct their lives. Further, given that (in fact) an expression of an emotion is not a report of the emotion, even if both Smith and Jones have con attitudes toward murder, it is perfectly inoffensive for Smith to say "Boo! murder" and for Jones to say "Hooray! murder" (in which case Jones would be insincere). If they express these attitudes to me, whose command am I to follow, Smith's or Jones', and why?

It's true, I agree that "murder is wrong" is a universal prescription that can translate into an exhortation and even command "You shall not murder" (for actions, as well as "Quell the murderous rage in your heart" for feelings), but it does not lose its truth-aptness and truth for all that. It prescribes a universal duty precisely by virtue of being true. If it were false, like "eating sandwiches is wrong" is false, then no universal duty would be engendered. Or rather "murder is wrong" is true by virtue of *corresponding* to a genuine duty to abstain from murder, etc. Hare is right in pointing out that issuing a command is distinct from persuading or giving reasons to the person being commanded to obey. But the two are linked: commands must have reasons for them that can be demonstrated logically to all men.

No "system of values," Ayer proposes, can be shown to be superior to any other system. A moral argument inevitably devolves into "mere abuse." He challenges us to "to construct even an imaginary argument on a question of value which does not reduce itself to an argument about a question of logic or about an empirical matter of fact."[6] Here are a few: I claim that peaceful cooperation under complementary (1) division of labor and (2) entrepreneurial seesaw is metaphysically superior to total war or egalitarian slavery. If someone disagrees, then we have a purely ethical argument. Same with a dispute regarding whether righteousness is its own reward, whether justice is

really the interest of the stronger, whether there are valid counterexamples to the principle of double effect, whether classical act utilitarianism can be proven, or whether the evictionist defense of the abortion liberty is justified. Or consider the proposition we will use later, "If stealing is wrong, then getting little brother to steal is wrong." Is it wrong to "get" (such as persuade or tempt) another person to do something wrong? If so, what kind of sin is it? How severe is it? What are the remedies for it? These are specifically moral inquiries.

Emotivism is problematic even for physical goods where the emotion of the will drives the judgment of the intellect. (1) "I like sushi" may indeed be as expression of one's preference. But it is also a report of the fact that (2) "Sushi is a physical good (for me)." We may admit that the proposition is true if and only if the preference is expressed, even only in the privacy of one's own mind. It is not, after all, human to mindlessly gobble up food without stopping so much as to notice what it is one is enjoying. But the emotional component, fruition, pleasure, utility, is always accompanied by the intellectual component, vision and understanding that a good is being consumed and exactly what sort of good this is. But it then follows that (2) is true any time an expression is made, and therefore emotivism, which claims that not only (1) but in addition (2) *means* an act of expressing an emotion rather than an act of proposing something or some fact to hold, is false. (1) and (2) together with (3) comprehension or secure possession of the sushi, combine to form a "human action" or in this case, a "human enjoyment."

That there is an intellectual component becomes evident when we look at the auxiliary considerations during an enjoyment which surround (2). There are *interesting questions*. What is it exactly about the taste that I enjoy? Can I predict whether I'd also enjoy sashimi? How *much* am I enjoying the sushi, both absolutely by apprehending the vehemence of the pleasure and relatively as in, am I getting my money's worth? What other physical goods do I sacrifice for the sake of this one? Will the sushi diet make me fat? How does this restaurant compare with others like it in various ways? Do I want to come back to it in the future? If I were, hypothetically, to abscond without paying, would that be a sin, and would they find me? The mind is most definitely awake throughout the process of consumption of a physical or economic good. Emotivism then is dubious for physical goods and a fortiori for moral and metaphysical goods, as well.

The Frege-Geach argument draws attention to the fact that the emotivist has trouble making sense of moral statements in unasserted contexts.[7] "Stealing is wrong" asserts something: on cognitivism, a truth-apt proposition; on emotivism, an expression of a sentiment. But what of "If stealing is wrong, then getting little brother to steal is wrong"? Surely, it is senseless to interpret it as "If Boo! stealing, then Boo!

getting little brother to steal." That's not a well-formed English sentence. So it must be taken some other way. But then what are we make of an apparently valid modus ponens like

(1) Stealing is wrong
(2) If stealing is wrong, then getting little brother to steal is wrong
Therefore,
(3) Getting little brother to steal is wrong?

In order for it to work, the meaning of "stealing is wrong" has to be the same in all four occurrences; otherwise, the argument fails due to equivocation. The emotivist cannot at first glance seem to handle it. Now there is a very simple way of solving this by biting the bullet. Consider the following example:

(4) If abracadabra, then hocus-pocus
(5) Abracadabra
Therefore,
(6) Hocus-pocus

This *looks* like a valid modus ponens, but if "abracadabra" and "hocus-pocus" cannot have truth values, it is nothing of the sort. It's gibberish. Similarly, if (1), the minor, has no truth value, then (2), the major, has no meaning; the apparent inference collapses; and hence (3) stays undefended; moreover, (3) itself seems to be a moral statement and as such, like (1), lacks a truth value. Which is perfectly fine as far as the emotivist is concerned. If the worry is that (2) seems *true*, then by denying not only that (1) is true but that (1) has a truth value at all, the emotivist has already put himself beyond the pale. He would have little compunction in denying in addition that (2) is meaningful. The cost of such a radical defense is that it eviscerates all moral reasoning, but Ayer, for example, was eager to do just that.

An attempt can be made to escape the conclusion that on emotivism (2) is meaningless. Now (2) is a moral claim which some may dispute, so to make things clearer, let's change it to a logically true proposition

(2*) If stealing is wrong, then it is wrong for little brother to steal

This is an instance of reasoning of the type: $\forall(x)[P]$; pick an arbitrary x (such as little brother); then for it, P will prevail. Then if "stealing is wrong" = "I hereby express my feeling of disapproval of stealing," then (2*) could mean (2*e) "If I express my disapproval of (a) stealing, then by that very fact I express my disapproval of (b) little brother's stealing." I see two problems with this. First, even if I express disapproval of (a), I need not do likewise for (b). Maybe I just don't *feel* like expressing disapproval for (b) at this very moment. Or ever, for that matter. No reason is given why one expression, if made, must be

followed by another five minutes later. Second, not only that, but it seems that even if I am eager to vomit out my feelings on a random philosopher, why must one *feeling* follow another? Feelings *by definition* aren't "logical"! It is hardly a logical blunder not to find (2*e) true. But (2*) is true necessarily, so we have made it somewhat meaningful at the expense of making it possibly false. And that is a contradiction which means that (2*) cannot be translated to (2*e).

Further, let

(7) If murder is wrong, then so is theft

It's not the case that I disapprove of theft simply by virtue of disapproving of murder. (7), while apparently true, cannot be interpreted in the manner of (2*e).

Blackburn is dissatisfied with this situation. He introduces an expressive language E_{ex} which has "hooray!" (H!) and "boo!" (B!) operators. H!(justice) is an expression of an attitude of approving justice, and B!(stealing) is a speech-act of disapproving stealing. The argument would then be rewritten thus:

(1ex) B!(stealing)
(2ex) H!(B!(stealing); B!(getting little brother to steal))
Therefore,
(3ex) B!(getting little brother to steal)

If one affirms the premises and denies the conclusion, then he will fail to have an attitude, namely, B!(getting little brother to steal) which he himself hoorays. Blackburn calls this a "fractured sensibility" which "cannot fulfill the practical purposes for which we evaluate things."[8] However, I fail to see what the big deal is. Why must anyone have any given attitude? Just because I like or hooray an attitude does not logically mean I am bound to have it. It does not even mean that I have a moral duty to have it! Conflicting feelings present no clear contradiction as between p and $\sim p$ in logic. In addition, (2) is not really a *moral* proposition that, if true, corresponds to moral reality; it is an instance of a material implication. Neither is (2*) about anything specifically moral. Yet (2ex), being an expression of an attitude, is a moral exhortation. This again suggests that (2ex) is an inadequate translation into the Blackburnian E_{ex}.

Given that $p \rightarrow q = \sim p$ or $q = \sim(p \ \& \sim q)$, there are a couple of other ways to construe the argument. Assume for the sake of simplicity that H! $= \sim$B!. Let's rewrite (2) as

(2or) ~B!(stealing) or B!(getting little brother to steal)

What is the meaning of (2or)? What is the function of the "or" operator? My best guess is that, consistent with the fact that the premises are not propositions but human *actions*, it sets up a *choice*:

(1or) B!(stealing)
(2or) Choose between H!(stealing) or B!(getting little brother to steal)
Does
(3or) B!(getting little brother to steal) follow?

Regarding (2or), we can ask, what if I like neither part of the choice? Can I reject both alternatives? To get around this problem, we can rewrite it as

(2*or) Which is the lesser of the two evils: H!(stealing) or B!(getting little brother to steal)?

Now actions are undertaken in a temporal sequence. I assert (1or) at t_1; I then make the choice offered in (2*or) at t_2. The problem is that between these moments I can legitimately change my mind (or rather my heart). At t_1 I booed stealing, and now at t_2 I no longer do. This picks up on the idea that propositions are timeless abstract objects, while actions are in the here and now. Or perhaps B!(getting little brother to steal) is such a bad choice for whatever reason that I am "forced" to reassess the situation and pick H!(stealing). Since B!(x) at t_1 does not contradict H!(x) at t_2, again the "emotivist" modus ponens fails to go through. A final attempt now:

(2and) B!(B!(stealing) & H!(getting little brother to steal)), according to the de Morgan's law (assuming it applies to this kind of thing)

Given also

(1and) B!(stealing),

can we conclude that

(3and) B!(getting little brother to steal)?

Suppose one accepts the premises but rejects the conclusion and says H!(getting little brother to steal). Then he will B!(H!(getting little brother to steal)) or *boo or disapprove of his own judgment*. What are we to make of this? Recall that the emotivist has imbued B! and H! with actual real-world meanings; we are not just pushing symbols around. I find B!(H!(x)) an implausible psychological state. It represents some sort of conflict in the heart of the person who fails to heed the moral modus ponens, but what sort? The analogy between this and 2nd-order desires or duties censuring desires, for example, is very weak. It may be that I approve of x but am thinking that I'm going too fast: maybe I haven't gathered enough evidence to conclude one way or another. But in this case I disapprove not of my approval but of the procedure according to which I have come to render my judgment. Again, Smith might be able to boo Jones' hooraying x, thereby condemning Jones. But it's hard to see how Smith can condemn *his own present self* in like manner. Then if

it is impossible meaningfully to disapprove of one's own approval, then B!(H!(x)) resolves into H!(x). And if on the other hand it is impossible to approve of something while disapproving of this approval, then it resolves into B!(x). Either upshot seems like a reasonable conclusion (or even I am permitted to conclude either at my pleasure). In a logical (and)-style syllogism, assuming p leads you to conclude $\sim\sim q$. This latter is (1) meaningful, (2) has a truth value, (3) contradicts $\sim q$. None of these hold for B!(H!(x)). As a result, (3and) simply need not follow, and this E_{ex} rendition is still not what the moral modus ponens "really means."

Booing and hooraying things seem to be exceedingly primitive reactions to moral reasoning. Ponder the following examples.

"Slavery is wrong if and only if libertarianism (or even a weaker feudal version of it) is right and economic conditions have advanced sufficiently. If slavery is wrong, then those still enslaved ought to be both freed and compensated. If slavery is not wrong, then it is the slave owners who ought to be compensated if forced to let go of their slaves. Libertarianism is right, but the extant historical stage is an empirical matter. At present, however, the economies of developed nations are highly complex and progressing at some speed. Therefore, we must free and compensate the remaining slaves." I dare Blackburn to rephrase this proof in noncognitivist terms. I suggest that the resulting formula, heaping boos upon hoorays, will be indecipherable.

"Now a thing is more involuntary through violence than through ignorance because violence is more directly opposed to the will than ignorance. Therefore robbery is a more grievous sin than theft. There is also another reason, since robbery not only inflicts a loss on a person in his things, but also conduces to the ignominy and injury of his person, and this is of graver import than fraud or guile which belong to theft."[9] How would an emotivist interpret this, that "I dislike robbery more than theft"? Should he gesticulate more vigorously and abundantly or draw more exclamation marks after "boo" when expressing his greater disapproval of robbery as vs. theft?

"If theft is wrong (a mortal sin) for a natural man, then a fortiori it is wrong, and graver, for a Christian, since the latter would fall farther from his state of grace than the former merely from the state of pure nature." I see no plausible emotivist version of this. Or how about "That stealing is wrong is a reason not to steal"? No tone of horror or exclamation marks seems warranted by this statement. Examples like these, including arguments of arbitrary and increasing intricacy, can be multiplied indefinitely.

The problem goes beyond complex propositions and touches on mental and spiritual states associated with morals. Suppose I stole some money and later think regretfully, (A) "I fear that stealing may be

wrong." Or suppose I let go of an opportunity to steal money from moral scruples and later think equally sadly, (B) "I doubt that stealing is wrong." On noncognitivism, what on earth am I actually thinking? It won't work to claim I am thinking gibberish, on the same level as "I fear that brokovitzes may soorify." Expressivists believe that "Stealing is wrong" has a definite meaning in contexts where it is asserted, namely enunciating disapproval of it. Expressivists therefore owe us an explanation of what it means in unasserted contexts, as well. I find their predicament rather hopeless in these particular cases since what I fear in (A) would seem to be that stealing is wrong objectively, that I made a genuine mistake in judgment. I am not saying (A*) "I fear that I may disapprove of stealing," as if a new emotion were close to replacing the old. As a result, this can't possibly be expressivized. But even if (A) could be translated into (A*), the further emotivist translation, "I fear feeling disapproval of stealing," is dubious and implausible. And "I doubt feeling disapproval" makes even less sense.

An attempt can be made at least to descry an expressivist version of "I believe that stealing is wrong." Schroeder suggests the following equivalence: "'Max believes that stealing money is wrong' is true just in case Max disapproves of stealing money, a state with world-to-mind direction of fit."[10] As Schroeder quickly points out, this assimilation of desire to belief introduces serious problems. One concerns interpersonal disagreement. When Smith *sincerely* says "Stealing is right (permissible)" by which he means "I like (am indifferent to) stealing," and Jones says "Stealing is wrong" by which he means "I dislike stealing," they are not disagreeing with each other or being in conflict. It may be that Smith might advocate laws that permit theft, and Jones might lobby to prohibit it, in which case they may well be at each other's throats, but within the realm of "morality," Smith is not disagreeing with Jones simply by liking what Jones dislikes. It may be that Smith wants to do *X*, and Jones does not want Smith to do *X*. Or perhaps Smith and Jones are both hungrily eyeing the last slice of pizza in the box. In such cases there may be a conflict of interests. But opinions on morality are hardly scarce physical goods being competed for by multiple people. In addition, agreement in beliefs often produces peace or concord; agreement in desires on the contrary regularly produces strife.

Then there are "intrapersonal" disagreements: Suppose Smith is contemplating whether to approve or disapprove of stealing. He finds that he quite likes stealing for certain reasons, but also dislikes it for various other reasons. He has to make a choice. It so happens that he dislikes it more than he likes it. It's hard to see how choosing to utter, all things considered, "I disapprove of stealing" is anything like saying "stealing is morally wrong" on cognitivism. In other words, Smith can find in himself *both* attitudes of approval and disapproval, something

that a cognitivist and in particular an objectivist will not experience. (The objectivist will of course be faced with *arguments* for and against a moral proposition, but in the end they will be resolved into an unequivocal verdict.) Thus, an objectivist can disagree with others while an emotivist perversely cannot; and an objectivist cannot "disagree with himself" (on pain of irrationality) while an emotivist perversely can.

The phenomenology of beliefs and desires seems to differ considerably. One possibly neglected point: a self-aware person will realize that beliefs and desires are experienced in the different "locations of the body." The soul informs the entire body, and Figure 1 shows that it, too, has a structure. Beliefs occur "in the head" while desires are felt "in the heart." And these locations are fixed. It's hardly possible to substitute one for the other.

There is also the "functional role" of moral beliefs and desires. As we have seen, objective moral beliefs motivate by positing duties to cleanse one's inner self from evil desires; emotions motivate through desires. The desire is extinguished in the first case; satisfied in the second.

Finally, the *intensity* of the feeling differs from the *confidence* of the belief: the difference between disapproving and "strongly" disapproving of abortion, for example, which is the sort of choice they may ask one to make in a public opinion poll, is not the same as the difference between being less and more certain that abortion is morally wrong. The fire and fury in the heart (or lack thereof) regarding a moral issue is not identical to the intellectual confidence in one's opinion (or again lack thereof) on the same issue.

Like all subjectivism, emotivism suffers from a variant of the problem of mind-dependence. Blackburn sets it up this way: "Suppose someone said 'if we had different sentiments, it would be right to kick dogs,' what could he be up to? Apparently, he endorses a certain sensibility: one which lets information about what people feel dictate its attitude to kicking dogs. But nice people do not endorse such a sensibility."[11] This is equivalent to proclaiming B!(subjectivism). But of course since emotivism is a noncognitivist version of subjectivism, this entails B!(emotivism). That's a fractured sensibility on Blackburn's part if there ever was one! And what if someone expresses H!(subjectivism)? How is he wrong or at least not "nice"? How can an expression of an attitude possibly be impugned? What is it about anyone's vomiting out his feelings that's objectionable? Doesn't everyone have a universal natural right to throw up? Now this criticism may seem misguided because on the definition of emotivism, since "stealing is wrong" is not truth-apt and is an expression of disapproval of stealing, there is nothing whose truth value depends upon the subjective feeling. First, "*X* is wrong" is an act of expressing disapproval of *X*. Its purpose may be, as

we have seen, to command others. Of course, this is preposterous, since no man is any sort of moral authority, except insofar as he has correctly apprehended natural law and teaches it to others. But then "*X* is wrong" is much more than an expression of disapproval; it's also an expression of the notion that *everyone must* disapprove. Emotivism fails to capture this feature of moral talk. Second, "I believe that *X* is wrong" = "I disapprove of *X*." What is the purpose of *this*? It can only be to state that one is not into *X*. *X* is not his own personal cup of tea. But surely, *X* may be *someone else's* cup of tea. Ethics is assimilated to economics, and metaphysical goods, to physical goods. On cognitivist subjectivism, moral truths depend on one's subjective preferences; on emotivism, there are no moral truths at all, there are *only* subjective preferences. Far from an improvement, this is deterioration.

Now perhaps an emotivist, *unlike* a cognitivist subjectivist, could affirm the following:

(T) Torture would be wrong even if I approved of it

This must mean something like that I disapprove of torture-that-is-approved-by-me. But how can this be? Do I disapprove of my own approval? I might if I thought that if I were to approve, I would be making a mistake. But emotivism does not countenance objective moral mistakes. There might be some wiggle room here if the me-who-approves in some close possible world is not quite the same *person* (in terms of transworld personal identity) as the actual me-who-disapproves. But I think the sole difference here is this single attitude switched on or off. It probably will not work to argue that I can actually disapprove of torture in the possible world in which I approve it.

Another idea is that emotivist Smith can call the opinion of Jones with which he differs "false." This can allow him to call reprehensible judgments false as long as he disagrees with them, for example. This, however, has similar implausible consequences as any version of metaphysical subjectivism. For example, any opinion Smith disagrees with is by that fact automatically false. And of course all of Smith's opinions are true (since Smith agrees with himself). In other words, Jones' judgment is objectively false not because Smith's contrary judgment is objectively true, but simply because it is different from Smith's subjective view. This is self-deification in a slightly new guise. For example, how does Smith know that his own understanding is not "reprehensible"? If there is an objective proof, then Jones' judgment will be false because it is disproven, not because the great and glorious "central planner" Smith disagrees with Jones, and his, Smith's, will is the true moral law. Self-deification of course is an unfortunate term because the real God does not pound morality into our heads. We have seen that the divine command theory of ethics is unsatisfactory, not the

least because God is hidden and does not tell us how to live. If we want to learn ethics, then we have to discover it on our own by studying the world. God is a laissez-faire sort of deity. Our Smith, on the other hand, has definite views on morality and, since by his own lights he is always right, must be prepared to coerce his fellow men into doing his bidding. Smith the emotivist then, far from being God, is merely a demon – pretender to the divine throne.

On this "deflationary" theory of truth, whatever opinion X Smith forms, he will agree with it and disagree with those who disagree with him. That makes X true and $\sim X$ false. But Jones who forms a contrary opinion makes it so that X is false and $\sim X$ is true. The only way for both of them to be right is through subjectivism and relativism, wherein the status of Y = "stealing is wrong" depends on who is saying it. And since stealing cannot be both wrong and not wrong, it must be that Y's "truth" consists in Smith's disliking stealing, and Y's "falsity" consists in Jones' liking stealing – this is the only way to ensure absence of contradiction. And we're back to mind-dependence.

Blackburn is a quasi-realist in ethics because he attempts, starting with his emotivism, to "earn the right" to speak of moral propositions as truth-apt. He seeks to "construct the truth." But of course if a philosopher can define "truth" itself as whatever he feels like, then there is no limit to what he can prove to be "true." I find Blackburn's project tedious and unprofitable.

Gibbard's norm-expressivism, though couched in byzantine terms, seems to me to come down to a rather simple argument. His schema for dealing with the Frege-Geach problem is to rewrite a modus ponens like

I like sushi
If I like sushi, then I also like fried calamari
Therefore,
I like calamari

as

H!(seafood)
Sushi is seafood
Therefore,
H!(sushi as an instance of seafood)
If sushi is seafood, then fried calamari is also seafood
Therefore,
Calamari is seafood
H!(calamari as an instance of seafood)

Obviously, these are hardly the same argument. But *moral* statements become true or false only on a given normative moral theory. The expressivist part is acceptance of a moral theory. Let N be one such theory, such as utilitarianism. The "little brother" argument will now

look like this:

(1) H!(*N*)
(2) *N* prohibits stealing
Therefore,
(3) H!(feeling guilty for stealing as part of *N*)
(4) If norm *N* which is the reason for me to hooray feeling guilty for stealing prohibits stealing, then *N* also prohibits getting little brother to steal
Therefore,
(5) *N* prohibits getting little brother to steal
(6) H!(feeling guilty for getting little brother to steal as part of *N*)

(5) follows logically from (2) and (4), all of which are factual statements. Unfortunately for this attempt, nothing entails or is entailed by an *act*, such as of expressing anything including "acceptance of a norm," unlike a proposition. Nothing whatsoever can *logically* follow from an act of expressing an attitude any more than anything can *logically* follow from an act of lighting a match or of punching someone in the nose. These things can certainly cause other future events, like punching someone in the nose can cause a fight to break out, but that is not modus ponens. Therefore, I deny that (3) follows from (1) and (2) or that (6) follows from (1) and (5). It may be that uttering (1) in some sense "commits" me to uttering (3), but the commitment is not ironclad at all. There is a way to fix this by changing (1) to (1s) I like *N*, etc. But this transmutes the argument into straightforward cognitivist subjectivism. It's true that *N* doesn't have to be a personal subjective moral code; it can be objective moral law. But if I have proven that *N* is objectively true, then any need for expressivism vanishes:

(1o) *N* is true, or *N* is the correct moral theory
(2o) *N* prohibits stealing
(3o) Therefore, stealing is wrong (tout court)
(4o) If stealing is wrong, then …
(5o) Therefore, getting little brother to steal is wrong

Emotivism reaches the height of absurdity with Stevenson's "*Any* statement about *any* matter of fact which *any* speaker considers likely to alter attitudes may be adduced as a reason for or against an ethical judgment." It's hard to beat *this* opinion as regards glorification of feelings and the "philosophy" thereof. Stevenson assimilates the altering of any "attitude" by any means whatsoever to ethical argumentation, including, for example, "rhetorical cadence, apt metaphor, stentorian, stimulating, or pleading tones of voice, dramatic gestures, care in establishing *rapport* with the hearer or audience, and so on."[12] Presumably then, saying "If you don't eat this sandwich right now *and enjoy it*, I'm going to kill you" therefore qualifies as a piece of moral

reasoning. Indeed, the resolution of an ethical issue for Stevenson consists in two men, *A* and *B*, coming to agree in attitudes, which is paradoxical since *A*, by coming to agree with *B*, may by that fact come to disagree with *C*. If *A* and *B* agree in the attitude of desiring the same job or the same woman, their agreement will be a source of division and competition between them, not of accord. Stevenson's other meaning of ethical reasoning is *A*'s making a "personal decision," synthesizing a choice from the multitude of inputs he considers. But this is unhelpful, as metaethics seeks to reveal the interaction of moral duties, 2nd-order desires, and 1st-order desires whose natures as inputs to deliberation differ fundamentally. It is no objection to this conclusion that I, too, consider the crucial aim of ethics to be to correct vicious feelings. It is reason that does the correcting, and it does so in precise ways by telling what to correct and how to correct it. Ethics is indeed the science of ends, limiting the kinds of permissible ends, just as economics is of means. But ethics does not opine on *all* ends; only on those it rules out and sometimes mandates; between the rest man chooses freely. The point is to justify human relations, to provide for *harmony* where it is virtuous and attainable and to harness conflict into serving (economic and social) *progress*. (These two are the basic principles at the root of all morality.) For me, there are right and wrong answers in ethics; for Stevenson, there is only a kaleidoscopic churning of attitudes.

Footnotes

a. Stevenson distinguishes thus: "Suppose that a man morally disapproves of a certain kind of conduct. If he observes this conduct in others, he may then feel indignant, mortified, or shocked; and if he finds himself given to it, he may feel guilty or conscience-stricken. But suppose that he dislikes this conduct, as distinct from morally disapproving of it. He may then be simply displeased when he observes it in others, and simply annoyed with himself when he finds that he is given to it." (*Ethics*, 90) But it is *irrational* to feel shock or guilt as opposed to mere displeasure or annoyance, unless the object of *moral* disapproval is objectively evil.

b. I won't press this rhetorical flourish too far because it is at least possible to interpret it not as "there exists a single unique narrow road for all men" but as "for each man, there exists a single narrow road that is unique to him" which might suggest moral subjectivism. But even on the second interpretation, how one was "brought up" is a red herring: one must find and walk the narrow road often despite a less than happy childhood.

Endnotes

1. Blackburn, *Spreading*, 198-9.

2. Blackburn, “Errors and the Phenomenology of Value” in *Essays*, 154-5.

3. Mt 7:13-14.

4. Blackburn, *Passions*, 16.

5. Ayer, *Language*, 110; emphasis added.

6. Ibid., 115-6.

7. Geach, “Assertion,” 463.

8. Blackburn, *Spreading*, 193-5.

9. *ST*, II-II, 66, 9.

10. Schroeder, *Noncognitivism*, 87.

11. Blackburn, *Spreading*, 218.

12. Stevenson, *Ethics*, 114; 139.

Conclusion

We began this book by introducing physical goods. Since we spend most of our waking hours chasing after them, it is easy to be hoodwinked into thinking that these are the only kind of goods there is.

Chapter 1 presents the big ontological picture. I endorse a triplist ontology which holds that there are three fundamental kinds or categories of things: merely material objects, human beings, and God. Unless there is such a thing as soul distinct from the body, it is hard to justify the distinction between physical, moral, and metaphysical goods. We should "use things but love people," they say. But if humans are "really" "nothing more" than involute machines, then I see no reason why one such machine ought to love another. Indeed, on materialism, urging that a man ought to love his neighbor seems as quaint as suggesting that a computer ought to love the printer next to it on the desk. It is equally impossible to make sense of the idea of sin by which I understand a self-inflicted *spiritual* injury, especially to charity in one's heart toward God or man.

Chapter 2 distinguishes between the four types of goods: physical, moral, metaphysical, and divine. It essayed to show why a man is a metaphysical good to his fellows. We made use of the four natural human relations, hostility, equality, hierarchy, and complementarity, and argued that the higher relation is always preferable to the lower relation. For example, peace lovers are often accused of being isolationist. But it is not isolationist, as in desirous of cutting relations altogether, to prefer the *relation* of international complementarity, fostered by, and only by, peace, to international hostility. Refraining from beating people up does not constitute isolationism. Such a general idea of course finds intricate applications in other cases. Take marriage where all four relations are present. Certainly there are sometimes power struggles between husband and wife, though they are contained and can even result in personal growth and stronger bonds. There is equality in the dignity and rights of both the man and the woman. There is a hierarchy in the sense that it is proper for a man (metaphorically) to possess his wife who surrenders to him. (Contrast it with homosexual sex, where it is a horrid indignity and injustice for a man to be possessed by another man; for a man to be thus sodomized is monstrous humiliation and disgrace. If it is objected that gay sex does not involve possession, then it by that very fact misses out on a key joy of sexuality.) And of course there is complementarity on multiple levels: bodily in the form of pleasure, spiritual in the form of love, within the domestic division of labor, and procreative in the form of children. (Again, very little of this sort of thing is found in homosexual relations.) Not every

human relation reaches this highest stage: for example, the parent-child relation is naturally hierarchical until the child grows up, and that, too, should be respected.

Given the four goods, we can trace the main components of human happiness: righteousness; virtue and self-knowledge; health, fame, and fortune; communion with God; and the heroic struggle to achieve these.

Chapter 3 develops the idea of duty-driven motivation. If humans are metaphysical goods and as such ought to be loved, then hating and bedeviling them is a violation of the moral law and is wrong. Hence I dissent from Mises that ultimate human ends are "given" to every science; I submit that they are not given to ethics. Ethics reserves to itself the right to anathematize certain ends as prohibited and to exalt other ends as obligatory. The desires to attain the reprobated ends are illegitimate and, far from having a claim on us to be satisfied, must on the contrary be extinguished. This is done by faithfully and over one's entire lifetime doing one's moral duties. Whatever spiritual corruption one is afflicted with, it is to be burned from the soul. Such desires I called "hollow." There may, in more advanced ethics, be desires that are required, such as to love one's fellows. Ethics proposes that such desires which I called "unfelt" are to be inflamed in the heart (if grace provides the spark). This is done by doing works of mercy, good deeds. These means palliate hatred, make nature whole, and engender charity. What ethics is concerned with principally is not external behavior but inner procession toward righteousness and sanctity.

Most of Chapter 4 is devoted to the critique of metaethical subjectivism and intersubjectivism. Objectivism follows not only from the rejection of these but also from the slice of the natural law ethics expounded herein. Since this ethics is grounded in the nature of man and of the world surrounding him, it is universal, applying to all people. Since its propositions can be rigorously proven, it is independent of one's attitudes or feelings: the moral law binds you whether you like it or not. For most issues, it features bivalence: there is a uniquely correct moral verdict, and all others are wrong.

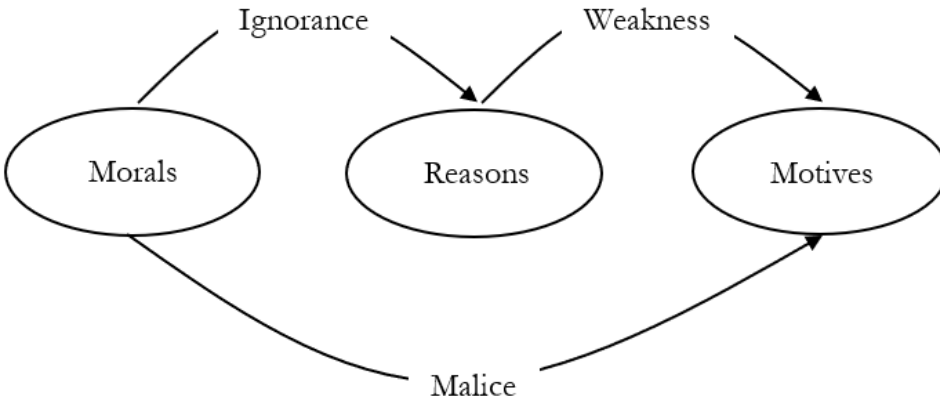

Figure 2. Internalism defeaters.

Chapter 5 concludes the treatment of the "moral problem" posed by Michael Smith by defending internalism. We have come down in favor of indefeasible morals/reasons judgment internalism, and defeasible morals/reasons existence, reasons/motive, and morals/motive internalisms as depicted in Figure 2.

Philosophers who are skeptical of metaethical naturalism propose that the "normative" or in my terms what ought to be or what ought to be loved is not found in nature. They are right if by "nature" they mean "whatever is studied by physics." In Chapter 6 I depart from this opinion, contending that various oughts can be deduced from the facts of life.

Two nihilistic metaethical doctrines – the error theory and noncognitivism – are dealt with in the last two chapters of this book, 7 and 8. Mackie's failure to identify objective values is due to his not seeing the forest for the trees: it is true that man subjectively values various material articles, but it is man himself who is an objective metaphysical good. A man thus by virtue of merely existing stands out to his fellows who are obliged to love him at least *for* themselves according to natural law and *as* themselves according to Christian morality. I further argue that the assorted attempts to debunk objective morality using the Darwinian theory of evolution are unconvincing. Finally, the most despicable metaethical position, noncognitivism, which teaches that ethics is only so much hustling and fighting, scratching and biting, all in order to alter people's feelings, is analyzed and dismissed as nonsensical on every level.

The moral law then is out there, and it pays to study it with the same dedication with which we attend to all the other efficient and final causes in the universe.

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